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THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Cold and wet

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Comment
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what next?**

In The Tabloid

Network

Top school's exam tables this Wednesday



20-page sport section

Interview:
the making of
Frankie Dettori

British unite against unequal society

90% agree distribution
of income is unfair

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

An overwhelming majority of Britons think incomes have become too unequal. For the first time all social groups agree that the gap between high and low incomes has become excessive.

In a result that will sound a warning bell for the Government just days ahead of a Budget which is expected to include pre-election tax cuts, nine out of 10 Britons, the highest proportion ever, think the distribution of income is unfair. There is also a remarkable consensus between high- and low-income groups, a survey will reveal later this week.

The increase in the proportion agreeing that the gap between high and low incomes is too big is not too surprising given the public outrage over "fat cat" pay awards. However, high earners used to be far less likely than average to agree. Concern about inequality has increased the most amongst this group.

According to the 13th annual survey of British Social Attitudes, due to be released on Thursday, public concern about inequality has increased steadily since 1983. In that year 72 per cent said the income gap was too large. This had climbed to 80 per cent by 1990 and 85 per cent in 1994. The latest survey shows another increase to 87 per cent in 1995. This occurred despite the fact that the income gap has stopped growing for the first time in 15 years. Official figures published last week showed that the shares of total income taken by the top and bottom tenths of the population have remained static since 1990, at 26 per cent and 2.5 per cent respectively.

For the second year running, high earners have said that they are broadly satisfied with their pay. In previous surveys they, like low earners, were disgruntled. The likelihood that inequality will increase further is shown by the fact that expectations about pay have diverged. The survey conducted last year of more than 5,000 people reveals that the proportions expecting to do better very well or very badly in the earnings league have risen.

Even though the survey also pro-

vides evidence that there is little concern about job insecurity, the results will provide useful ammunition for the Labour Party. It points out that tax cuts since 1980 have disproportionately favoured the well-off, and the Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown has pledged to introduce a bottom rate of income tax of 10 to 15p in the pound.

Earnings inequality has risen faster in the UK since 1980 than in any other industrial country apart from the US. Britain has the third highest proportion of low-paid workers after the US and Canada.

However, the British Government has been almost alone in its lack of concern about the international trend towards greater inequality. Despite criticism from the ultra-free market Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which has praised most other aspects of government economic policy, ministers are opposed to US and Japanese proposals for the OECD to study ways to slow the trend.

The Government is likely to draw comfort from the fact that the new survey, by Social and Community Planning Research, shows there is almost no evidence of job insecurity. Although people now think it would take longer to find a new job than they used to, the proportion of the workforce in the same job for more than five years has increased. The proportion expecting to lose their job through redundancy has fallen.

Nor is there any evidence that the recession hit managers and professionals particularly hard. They are much less likely than people from other social backgrounds to have experienced unemployment, with only 14 per cent having been unemployed compared with 29 per cent of the bottom two income categories. The proportion of the professional classes becoming unemployed is the same as it was in 1983, but it has risen slightly for blue-collar workers.

However, reported hours worked have increased in successive surveys. The proportion working more than 40 hours a week has risen from 26 per cent to 31 per cent between 1983 and 1995, while the proportion working 60 hours or more has climbed from 2 per cent to 3 per cent.

For one day only: a £250,000 painting for £400



Marianne Macdonald
Arts Correspondent

Want to buy a Canaletto, Holbein or Van Gogh but think you cannot quite afford them? The solution is at hand. Next month, Bonhams is hosting an auction of paintings from the studio of the well-known faker Miguel Canals with works from Old Masters to French Impressionists.

Treats on offer include a copy of Gustave Caillebotte's *A Parisian Street Scene* (above; up to £250,000

if the original was sold at auction, up to £400 in the Bonhams sale.) De-gas's *The Dancer's Studio* (up to £1m on the open market; up to £500 at Bonhams); Manet's *On the Beach* (up to £400); Edvard Munch's *A Portrait of Four Children* (up to £350).

In perhaps the nicest twist, someone will be able to pick up a copy of a portrait which was sold in the original by Sotheby's last Wednesday for a fraction of the price. That was *A Portrait of Three Young Girls* from the circle of Robert Peake. The delightful

painting of three girls, all wearing ruffs, the smallest one clutching a doll, went for £254,500 at Sotheby's. The Bonhams copy is estimated at a more down-to-earth £600 to £800.

The paintings go far more cheaply than they would if bought direct from the Barcelona-based Canals studio, set up by Miguel Canals at the end of the 1970s after he had mixed with Pablo Picasso and Joan Miro at his father's canvas factory.

Mr Canals died last year, but his contribution in founding one of the

first studios to produce high-quality fakes is continued by his family who run a studio staffed by 14 fakers, each with his or her own specialist period or painter.

All their copies carry the signature of the original painter they are faking - if the work was signed by the artist in the first place - which is legal once they are out of copyright.

Despite the fact that paintings from the Canals studio would fool almost no one in the art world, they are often bought by the seriously rich

to use in second homes as decoration without the need for insurance.

Pippa Stockdale, the specialist in charge of the sale on 3 December, reports that they will often buy them for just a few months and then swap them with others following a change of mood or colour scheme.

With such a choice, it could offer a perfect Christmas present. But it is a long auction and the bidding goes slowly. Anyone after the Toulouse Lautrec *The Dancer* (up to £600), you will be in for a long wait.

Russia's \$64m question: anyone seen our rocket?

Phil Reeves
Moscow
and Charles Arthur

Russia was last night desperately trying to track down its spacecraft bound for Mars, which ran into trouble shortly after lift-off but before it had escaped the Earth's atmosphere. The six-tonne rocket could circle the Earth for up to a month before falling, towards the surface - either to burn up or crash.

The failure deals a huge blow to Moscow's tottering space programme, and is a second calamity for British space scientists, some of whom had experiments on board representing up to 10 years' work. In June, the European Space Agency's *Ariane-5* rocket blew up seconds after take-off - destroying another set of British experiments which had taken years to design.

With the \$64m (\$40m) craft slowly orbiting the earth, Russian space agency officials have a humiliating wait for it to be pulled back into the atmosphere. The Russians say that that almost all the probe will burn up on re-entry, but there were initial fears that four small thermoelectric generators, each less than an inch long but containing highly radioactive plutonium, might survive re-entry to land on the surface.

However Richard Tremayne-Smith, head of the British National Space Centre (BNSC) said last night: "There's less than a gram of plutonium in total, and the canisters are each less than an inch long. They'll burn up."

The failure means Russia is now totally eclipsed as a space power. Despite having first put man in space, it has fallen behind. Many of the Russian scientists on this project were working for no pay - hoping that it would succeed. This failure makes it very unlikely that Russia will try another mission to Mars: of the 11 it



Lost in space: Mars-96 takes off from Kazakhstan on Saturday

British research groups also had experiments on board.

The so-called *Mars-96* probe ran into difficulties not long after taking off late on Saturday night from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

The much-vaunted mission, which had been delayed by two years due to cash shortages, was to have included gathering data about when water last flowed on the Red Planet - information which could offer critical clues over whether there was once life there.

Its 60-million mile journey to Mars, the nearest planet, would have lasted 10 months, and yielded a wealth of photographs, samples and other data that would finally restore prestige to Russia's ailing and underfunded space programme. In the event, it fizzled out almost the moment it had begun.

Just over 20 minutes after launch, its fourth-stage rocket boosters are believed to have failed to ignite, leaving it stranded in orbit, but out of contact with controllers. "We will carry on looking for it for days," said a flight manager, Konstantin Sukhanov.

Russian pride has taken another blow, according to *Izvestia* newspaper, after just discovering that the second of their two state-of-the-art spy satellites burnt out in the autumn, forcing them to consider leasing one from China.

But the loss of the Russian probe would not have been a complete surprise to the international space community. Several weeks ago, one of the top scientists on the project, Vasily Moroz, revealed that the Russian Space Agency lacked the funds to carry out vital tests on two of four landing craft that the probe was to have sent to the planet's surface to carry out tests on the Martian atmosphere and climate, and to look for traces of ice beneath its surface.

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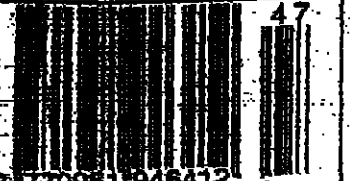
QUICKLY

Exodus from Zaire
At Mungwa - one of the largest refugee camps in the world - a hundred of the weakest and the sickest of the 500,000 Zairians who lived there left behind. Page 9

Norris leads post
Steve Norris, the Tory MP who resigned as transport minister in July because he said he could no longer afford to live on the salary, and who is to leave Parliament at the election, has secured a £150,000-a-year job as Director General of the Road Haulage Association, a lobbying group for heavy hauliers. Page 2

CONTENTS

The Broadsheet	
Business & City	17-19
Comment	13-15
Foreign News	9-12
Gazette	16
Home News	2-8
Law Report	16
Leading Articles	13
Letters	13
Obituaries	20
Science	17
Shares	17
The Tabloid	
Arts	4,5
Chess	30
Culture	2,3
Crossword	30
Generation Gap	8
Listings	28,29
Network	9-26
Radio and Television	31,32
Weather	30



news

Labour referendum plan turns single currency heat on Tories

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Labour's decision to agree to a referendum on the single currency yesterday increased Conservative pressure on the Prime Minister to rule out Britain as a founding member of the euro cash system.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, yesterday revealed Labour's change of heart in an interview with *The Independent on Sunday*, having previously insisted that the voters' views could be tested either in an election or referendum.

Mr Brown said it had become clear that no final decisions about economic and monetary union would come before the election, which meant that a referendum was now the only appropriate way of consulting the people.

"There's got to be active consideration by the Government of this big decision," he told BBC's *Breakfast with Frost*. "And there's got to be active consent from the British people."

But Labour's decision to match John Major's pledge of a referendum safety valve gave fresh impetus to the Tory Euro-sceptic demand for an embargo on single-currency membership.

Right-wing backbencher Sir William Michael Spicer said: "I would certainly like us to make it absolutely clear that we would not join the single currency in the lifetime of the next government."

"The electorate would like it as well. If this action by the Labour Party pushes us in that direction, that would be a very good thing electorally."

Mr Brown said it had become clear that no final decisions about economic and monetary union would come before the election, which meant that a referendum was now the only appropriate way of consulting the people.

Bill Cash, another Tory Euro-sceptic, said: "It's highly dangerous for the Conservative Party to have the Labour Party saying they want a referendum on the same terms." He urged his party to extend the referendum principle to take in the whole question of future integration in Europe, rather than just a single currency.

But Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman, said: "This is just a smokescreen to hide the fact that new Labour would take Britain headlong into a federal Europe. Mr Blair

is in favour of a federal Europe. He would not defend Britain's national interest and he would sign away our veto and our jobs through the Social Chapter. "That is his true instinct. His heart lies in Brussels rather than in Britain."

Mr Brown told the Frost programme: "We are a pro-European party. We believe it would be wrong for Britain to leave Europe: 60 per cent of our trade is with Europe and I believe that if there was a vote tomorrow amongst the British people as to whether they want

to stay in Europe, it would be absolutely clear people want to stay as part of Europe."

He also drew the further distinction between Labour and the Conservatives; that Labour favoured the single currency in principle.

"We support and see substantial benefits in a single currency," he said. "But we've always said the decision has got to be made in the national economic interest at the time."

As for the way in which a referendum would operate, Mr Brown said that once the terms

had become clear, there would be a Cabinet recommendation to the Commons, followed by legislation and a trigger referendum.

The policy would be included in the election referendum and, as with the Conservatives, ministers who dissented from the Cabinet line at the time, would have to resign or toe the line in public.

The fact that Mr Brown is the most gung-ho member of the Shadow Cabinet in favour of a single currency should help the party's pro-Europeans accept the change for what it is – and not as a signal of increased Euro-scepticism.

But in the immediate future, it would appear that both government and opposition front benches are unwilling to accede to the growing backbench demand for a full-scale debate on the single currency – as demanded by the all-party European Legislation Committee – for fear that it would expose the rifts in both parties.

Leading article, page 13

Continental look forward to a clearing of the air

Sarah Helm

Labour's decision to hold a referendum before any decision to join the single currency is likely to be welcomed in many continental capitals, where governments have become increasingly irritated by British anti-European attacks.

European diplomats said

that perhaps a referendum in Britain might allow a healthier debate on the issue and clear the air once and for all, so that Britain could play a more positive role in Brussels the announcement caused little surprise, and officials said it had long been expected that whichever party won the election would probably call a referendum on the issue.

Commission officials said that it was up to each member-state individually to choose what constitutional means it wanted to invoke when a decision to join is made. "Britain won its right to opt out. It is now up to them to decide separately whether they want to participate and the way they choose to do so is up

to them," said a Commission spokesman.

Neil Kinnock, the European Transport Commissioner, recently advised Tony Blair against opting for a referendum on the single issue of monetary union. In an interview he said a referendum on specific European issues would be "perilous" for Mr Blair.

Handgun debate to haunt Major

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Critics of the Government who stand against a total ban on handguns said yesterday that they expected ministers to win a critical Commons vote tonight – but the issue would return to haunt the Tories as an election issue in May.

The Government, which has a current one-vote majority in the Commons, is expected to win tonight with the help of some of the Ulster Unionists. But David Trimble, leader of the nine-strong Unionist contingent in the House, yesterday delivered a strong hint that John Major might not last his full term – through to the planned May election. He said that while there was no question of his party doing its "damndest to bring any government down", the situation could arise where he and his colleagues could support a Labour motion of no confidence – if carried, the procedural means of forcing an election.

Pending by-elections threaten Mr Major's majority of one, which he obtained in the BSE vote last Wednesday when the Ulster Unionists backed Labour.

There is growing Westminster speculation that Mr Trimble might be tempted to bring down Mr Major early, to curry favour with an in-coming Labour government. However, tonight's vote on guns is expected to see the Government through – with Unionist backing.

David Mellor, the former Cabinet minister, who plans to vote against a three-line government whip for the first time since he became an MP 17 years ago, said yesterday: "They will win the vote but they will lose the argument."

He said on *Breakfast with Frost* on BBC Television: "The difficulty the Government faces tomorrow is if they had a free vote they would lose."

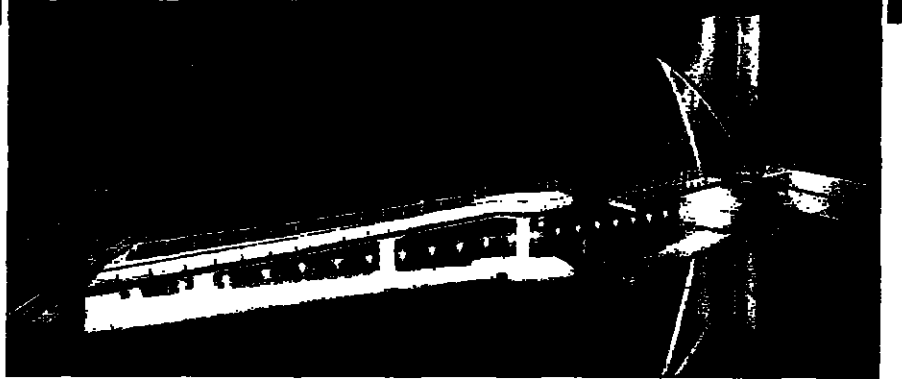
"Because they're not having a free vote, more timorous spirits than me will vote with the Government against their consciences, so the Government will have a pyrrhic victory."

In Edinburgh, Alex Salmond, leader of the Scottish National Party, said of the Government's stance: "Were they to win the vote this way, then neither the parents nor the public would accept it, and the need for a complete handgun ban would inevitably become a general election issue."



Arts flour by the Tyne

The Baltic Flour Mills, in Newcastle (above), are to be at the centre of a £100m arts development unveiled yesterday by Gateshead Council. The 80ft building, on the Tyne, has been lifeless for several years apart from providing, on its highest parapet, the world's largest nesting site well inland for kittiwakes. The package includes a concert hall and music centre for the region's orchestra, the Northern Sinfonia, which has been homeless for 40 years. The council also wants a £12m footbridge (shown right) linking the complex to Newcastle Quayside, a vibrant nightlife area. It is estimated that more than 1,000 jobs will be created by the proposed development.



Norris lands £150,000 roads lobby job

Christian Wolmar
Westminster Correspondent

Steve Norris, the former transport minister, is well on the way to achieving his goal of making large amounts of money after he secured a £150,000 job to head a lobbying group for lorry hauliers.

Mr Norris, who is to leave Parliament at the next election, resigned as transport minister in July because he said he could no longer afford to live on the salary and will take up the post of director-general of the Road Haulage Association in May, the probable month of the general election.

The appointment was immediately criticised by Labour.

Brian Wilson, one of the party's transport team, said: "The impression of ministers legislating for the future lining of their pockets is hugely reinforced. This is a disgraceful transition from ministerial office to one of the most powerful lobbying organisations in the country. If this is allowed under the rules, there is something wrong with the rules."

It is not surprising that Mr Norris, who has already been considered as possible head of the Automobile Association and who is also likely to take up a one-day-a-month chairmanship of Capital City Bus, a London bus company, defended the appointment as

having been approved by the Carlisle committee which vets former ministers' business appointments. He said the job is a fascinating challenge: "The truck is the least-loved element in the transport system and yet the most vital. While I will continue to do everything to ensure more freight is carried on rail, the reality is that most truck journeys are for 50 miles or less and there is no alternative."

It is not surprising that Mr Norris, who is widely liked both inside and outside Parliament, was much sought after because of his media-friendly personality, to say nothing of his female-friendly personality which made him famous as the man

with five mistresses, all featured prominently in the tabloids. However, it is completely unexpected for Mr Norris, who as transport minister was more effective than any other politician at toning down the roads-obsessed transport policy, to get into bed with the rapidly pro-roads RHA.

Mr Norris says he has not changed his views: "I have told them I am not going to argue for a massive road-building programme and the old predict and provide" policies of the 1980s. I quite accept that some restrictions on lorries are perfectly reasonable but I will be arguing that local authorities must provide alternatives such

as feeder distribution points on the outskirts of towns."

Mr Norris replaces the completely unknown Bryan Colley in the job and will bring a much more high-profile approach to the RHA. Privately, it is thought he is sceptical of the approach of the roads lobby, led by the British Roads Federation, which has continued to argue for massive road-building programmes which are now seen by the public as completely unacceptable. Mr Norris who was widely respected in the Department of Transport will undoubtedly be very useful at lobbying behind the scenes as well as being the public face of the lobby.

significant shorts

Unofficial IRA ceasefire is denied

A report that an unofficial IRA ceasefire has been in place for several weeks to facilitate private negotiations between Sinn Féin and the Government was denied yesterday by both parties. SDLP leader John Hume, who has been acting as a channel of communication between the two sides, also said he was not aware of an unofficial ceasefire.

Although the denials were comprehensive, they have not dispelled the widespread belief that a serious negotiation is in train, which could lead to a renewed IRA cessation.

The Prison Service refused to comment last night on reports of an escape plot uncovered at Full Sutton Prison, near York, where bars of soap containing master-key impressions for two high-security jails were discovered in a cell vacated last week by IRA gunman, Michael O'Brien, who is now completing his 18-year sentence in Ireland.

Estates need community spirit boost

Housing associations should do more to stop new estates becoming stigmatised by crime and other social problems, according to a new study of residents' views.

Residents want more energy put into building community spirit, said the study. Researchers from Sheffield Hallam University interviewed residents and housing professionals on four new estates in Yorkshire.

Author David Page warned housing associations in 1993 that they risked repeating past mistakes by building large estates with high child densities and concentrations of the poorest, most vulnerable, tenants. The research was prompted by a special Joseph Rowntree Foundation report three years ago.

Dentist struck off for assault

Police are interviewing 450 patients of a woman dentist in an investigation following allegations of assault and malpractice.

Diane Wiltshire, of Eastwood, Notts, was detained and then granted bail following a complaint from a patient. She has been removed from the dentist's register, it was officially confirmed by the General Dental Council, the dentists' professional governing body. A police spokesman said yesterday that more than 100 patients had already been questioned.

Blacks feel more British

A new survey of black people living in Britain shows that 40 per cent think of themselves as British rather than African or Afro-Caribbean.

The NOP poll of 18-35 year-olds, commissioned by the black weekly newspaper, *New Nation*, also found 32 per cent believed that race relations had improved over the past five years.

However, 40 per cent believed race relations had deteriorated.

Publisher, Tetteh Kofi, said that the results showed that society held many misconceptions about the way black people feel.

"This survey shows that black people in Britain, despite social challenges, are making a go of their lives as an integral part of the UK," he said.

'Girls lured into Satanism'

An inquiry was under way yesterday into allegations of Satanism said to involve teenage girls at the Royal Manor School in Dorset. Three men have been arrested following the allegations, and are being questioned by police about supplying controlled drugs.

The raids followed information supplied to police by the *News of the World* which said a 15-year-old schoolgirl "sex slave" was forced to feed on the blood of a man who had slashed his chest, leaving a wound in the shape of a crucifix.

Pensioner on murder charge

An 88-year-old man was charged today with the murder of his wife, Florence Challis, also 88, died in hospital on Saturday.

Police were were called to the couple's flat in Laindon, Basildon, by neighbours. A post-mortem showed the cause of death as asphyxiation. Mr Challis will appear before Basildon magistrates today.

Airliners' near miss inquiry

The Department of Transport's Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) has opened an inquiry into a serious near miss incident over Essex last week, in which a passenger jet dropped to within 100 feet of the track of another airliner circling below it. Both were waiting to land at London's Heathrow Airport.

The KLM Boeing 737, with 69 passengers on board, and a Scandinavian Air Services MD-80, with 71 passengers, were circling above Stapleford in Essex while a problem with a landing aircraft was sorted out on the runway at Heathrow.

The Boeing, from Amsterdam, was cleared to maintain a height of 15,000 feet and the MD-80, from Aarhus in Denmark, was flying at 14,000 feet.

Labour MP attacked

A 30-year-old man was yesterday charged with assaulting Labour's employment spokesman, Ian McCartney.

He was charged following an incident at the MP's local Labour club in Wigan, Greater Manchester, on Saturday, in which Mr McCartney suffered a broken nose.

Police said Keith James Quinn, of Warrington Road, Goose Green, Wigan, was charged with assault causing actual bodily harm and bailed to appear before Wigan magistrates on 16 December.

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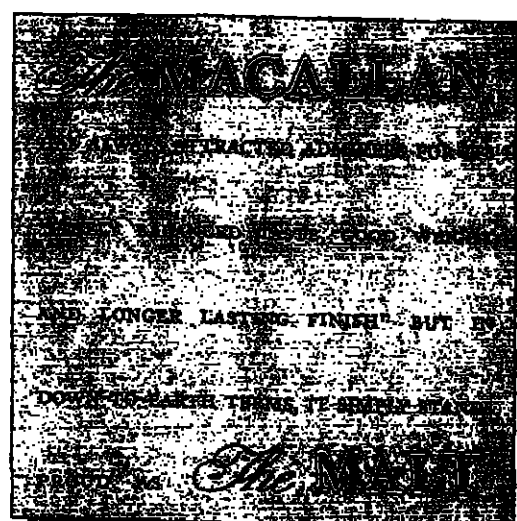
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Oscar-winning actor with a history of glamorous liaisons makes a match of two literary dynasties

Dramatic conclusion to the dalliances of Daniel Day-Lewis

Louise Jury

The Oscar-winning actor Daniel Day-Lewis has made a commitment destined to break the hearts of a thousand female fans. He has got married.

In a private ceremony last week, the enigmatic and volatile star renounced the bachelor's life in a union of two famous literary names. He, the son of the late poet Laureate Sir Cecil Day-Lewis, wed Rebecca Miller, the film-maker/actress daughter of Arthur Miller, arguably the greatest living American playwright.

The occasion was surrounded in high secrecy. The 39-year-old actor notoriously loathes any intrusion into his privacy, although as one of Britain's great acting successes with an eye for some of the world's most beautiful women, he has always failed to quell the public probing.

While refusing to give details, Day-Lewis's sister Tamasin Day-Lewis, a documentary and film-maker three years his senior, yesterday confirmed the wedding had taken place.

The bride's guest list was headed by her father and mother, Miller's third wife, the photographer Inge Morath, to whom he has been married for 34 years.

"It was completely perfect," Ms Day-Lewis said yesterday. "It was a family occasion, terribly small, with only the closest people there. Everyone was fantastically happy and he's fantastically happy."

The good thing about the wedding,

which it is understood took place in the United States, was that the press had only discovered it afterwards, Ms Day-Lewis said.

"What was an incredibly private occasion managed not to be discovered by the press. He did it how he wanted to."

Daniel Day-Lewis's personal and professional life has been a source of much conjecture ever since he came to fame portraying a gay punk in *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985).

The highs have seen him feted in Hollywood where he won an Oscar in 1990 for best actor for playing Christy Brown in *My Left Foot*. The lows included fleeing the stage of the National Theatre mid-performance in 1989 when he cited nervous exhaustion for his inability to continue playing Hamlet.

He is renowned for throwing himself completely into any role, becoming almost indistinguishable even off-duty from the character he is portraying. One of his rare comments on marriage was about his acting, not his love life. "I've always allowed the work to dictate to me, by necessity, the circumstances of my life. It's a marriage," he said.

Yet his romantic liaisons have always won him as many column inches of publicity as his performances. He has romanced the actresses Julia Roberts and Winona Ryder, co-incidentally now his co-star in a film of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Other gossip has linked him with the singer Sinéad O'Connor and the actresses Greta Scacchi and Juliette



Reluctant star: Day-Lewis (top left) was married last week to the film-maker Rebecca Miller (top right) - daughter of the photographer Inge Morath and the playwright Arthur Miller (top centre with his second wife, the actress Marilyn Monroe) - settling down after relationships with the actresses Isabelle Adjani (left), Julia Roberts and Winona Ryder (right) with whom he appeared in *The Age of Innocence* (right)

Binoche. For six years, he had a fiery relationship with the beautiful French actress Isabelle Adjani to whom he wrote sealed letters. Day-Lewis is reported to have ended the love affair by fax shortly before she gave birth to his child 18 months ago. But his side of the incident, which generated a great many column inches of press comment, was never publicly aired.

It is understood that he met Rebecca Miller while working on the screen version of *The Crucible*, which is due to open in the United States this week. She is an actress and movie-maker noted for the prize-winning film *Angela*, about a girl with a manic-depressive mother.

However, Day-Lewis had worked hard to keep the relationship under wraps and exploded in irritation when questioned about it at a press conference for *The Crucible* only days before the wedding ceremony. Asked whom he had met first, Arthur or Rebecca, he said: "It is a good thing you asked me this at the end or I would have left immediately."

Daniel Day-Lewis and his sister were the children of their father's second marriage, to the actress Jill

When a mother has other intentions

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

Henri-Georges Mauranges is 34 years old and perhaps the most reluctant bachelor in France. He has a fiancée, he has the rings, he had booked the registry office and the reception. Then two days before the wedding, his mother said "Non", and when he retorted that he was a grown man well over the age of majority and intended to go ahead, his parents took him to court. Henri-Georges's honourable intentions now wait on the decision of an appeal court.

The Mauranges live in the furthest corner of the largely agricultural Corrèze region. Henri-Georges works for his mother's business. In the small community, everyone knows everyone else, and a good number of the locals side with his mother.

Mme Mauranges *mère*, an estate manager in nearby Périgieux, owns a small château, and M Mauranges *père* is a notary in a nearby town. They brought the case against Henri-Georges under a law dating from 1804 which forbids marriages where one party is found to "lack the necessary discernment".

The strongest evidence for Henri-Georges's lack of discernment in his parents' eyes is his choice of fiancée, Liliane, a divorcee seven years his senior with three children and a grandchild.

Other reasons offered for Liliane's unsuitability include the fact that her father was active in the communist-leaning CGT trade union, and the possibility that if they have no children, the château could pass to his step-children and so out of the Mauranges family.

When the first wedding, set for 14 September, was prevented at such short notice, the couple held the reception and exchanged rings anyway. Only the registry office had to be cancelled. Interviewed recently on television, the couple appeared to be fully in possession of their faculties, and even able to laugh at the situation.

A lower court has already found in their favour. It lifted the court order banning the marriage and ordered Henri-Georges's parents to pay 8,000 francs in damages. Mme Mauranges gave notice of appeal, and the ban was reimposed pending the appeal court's decision. The case - which pits modern France against the priorities and prejudices of an earlier age - is expected to be heard shortly.

Multi-millionaires who keep Blair in his office

Jojo Moyes

Tony Blair's office yesterday refused to confirm the names of donors to his private office fund, because, it said, it did not know the identity of them. The details of the office funding have not been made public along with the rest of Labour Party funding.

But Labour's shift from mainly union funding to high-profile "Labour Luvvies" and high-donation big businesses, is evident. Yesterday it was revealed that some of Britain's richest tycoons have given donations to the recently formed Labour Leader's Office Fund, under an arrangement which deliberately disguises their identities.

The donors are said to include Sir Trevor Chinn, chairman of Britain's biggest motor dealers, who was knighted by the Conservatives; the multi-millionaire Sir Emmanuel Kaye, an award-winning industrialist and former leading figure in the CBI; Sir Alex Bernstein, former chairman of Granada, and Bob Garmy, a publishing millionaire who has publicly donated to the Labour Party.

Mr Chinn has confirmed he is a donor. But a spokesman for Mr Blair said yesterday: "We don't know whether the names are accurate. It's a blind trust. Mr Blair certainly doesn't know."

The "blind trust" exists to avoid accusations of cash for favours. Recipients are unaware of the identity of their donors so that no link exists between money and political influence. Only three trustees - the former Home Secretary Lord Merlyn-Rees, Baroness Jay and Baroness Dean, former general secretary of printing union Sogat - know who the mystery donors are.

The spokesman said that the Office Fund, understood to be nearly £500,000, is being used to pay Mr Blair's 15-strong staff and cover private expenses. It was set up last year with the approval of Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

As news of the secret fund emerged, Conservatives were quick to accuse Labour of

Identities of business tycoons making large gifts have not been made public by Labour



Money men: Sir Trevor Chinn and Sir Alex Bernstein (top, left and right) are thought to have helped Tony Blair's office. John Mortimer and Matthew Harding (middle, left and right) are high-profile Labour supporters, while Kevin Keegan and Greg Dyke (bottom, left and right) are refusing to reveal if they are donors

hypocrisy. But the deputy leader John Prescott pointed out that the fund is declared in the Register of Members' Interests. Referring to protests by Tory party chairman Brian Mawhinney and the Prime Minister he told *The Independent*: "I challenge them to join with

funding from businesses who believe it increasingly likely he will become Prime Minister. As the names show, that funding is coming from traditionally Tory supporters. This is largely due to the influence of Paul Blagborough, a former executive at Save & Prosper, who took over as Labour's director of finance in 1993. He is credited with revolutionising the way the party raises funds.

Following the millionaire publisher Paul Hamlyn's significant donation in 1990, Mr Blagborough saw that by pursuing wealthy donors, he could give Labour a veneer of success.

The party subsequently set up the 1,000 Club "to acknowledge supporters who donate a minimum of £1,000 a year to the party". New, high-profile supporters included actor Stephen Fry and comedian Ben Elton.

But Mr Blair made it clear he was more interested in being backed by big business and began wooing potential donors with business forums and glittering fundraising.

His strategy appears to have worked. Last year David Sainsbury, chairman of the supermarket group, announced he would vote Labour. Pearson and Tate & Lyle, both donors to the Tory party, made significant donations. One of the most recent donors was Matthew Harding, Britain's 87th richest man, who pledged £1m to Labour before dying in a helicopter crash last month. He joined Swraj Paul, the chairman of the Caparo Group, Chris Haskins, chairman of Northern Foods, and Philip Jeffrey, who made his fortune from DIY chain Fairs.

Many of Labour's best-known donors will not confirm they are giving donations at all. They are believed to include Lord Hollick, head of United News & Media; Greg Dyke, the television executive; Melvyn Bragg, film producer David Puttnam; and football manager Kevin Keegan.

But the revelation about Mr Blair's latest high-profile support - with its message that Labour has the support of business leaders - is one leak that is unlikely to worry the Labour Leader at all.

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Sex attacker stalks Jane Austen territory

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

A serial rapist who may have struck up to 12 times and could be responsible for the abduction of one woman and the murder of two others, is believed to be at large in Bath, the city more normally associated with Georgian grandeur and Jane Austen gentility.

Police are investigating links between sex assaults in Bath and Bristol since 1991 amid fears that the attacker could soon strike again. So far they have identified connections between six incidents. It is understood that a six further possible cases have also been found. A team of 60 detectives is also examining the abduction of a 26-year-old woman from a Bath night club earlier this year and the murders of two women from outside clubs in Bristol and Plymouth.

A series of attacks – the latest involved the rape of a 16-year-old in Bath at the end of October – have caused fear and anxiety in the city. An offer by the city's newspaper of 200 cut price rape alarms was sold out in two days. The police have identified three

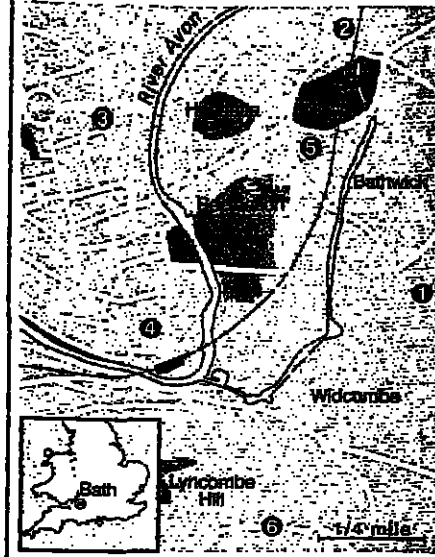
factors that link many of the cases. Women are often assaulted as they get into a car and the attacker has a mask or stocking and uses a knife. But the biggest worry facing detectives is that the attacker may also be a murderer.

In June this year Melanie Hall, 26, a hospital clerical worker, disappeared after a night out at Cadillac's nightclub in Bath. She has not been seen since: no money has been taken from her bank account and her black Mini has remained in the car park at the Royal United Hospital. Police are also looking at possible links with the case of Louise Smith, 18, who was murdered after vanishing outside a nightclub in Yate, near Bristol, on Christmas Day last year. Her naked body was later found in a quarry. Detectives have also been

in contact with Devon and Cornwall police about the murder of Nicola Parsons, 18, who was last seen at a nightclub in Plymouth. Her body was found nearby. She had been raped and strangled. At this stage the links between the sex attacks is far more concrete than the murder cases and abduction, although there are similarities. Detective Superintendent Bill

Davies, who is heading the investigation, said: "There are potential links with six cases and there are a number of others we are looking at. Part of the *modus operandi* is similar, which is causing us concern. "We have decided to go back to 1991 and see what other offences have been committed in Bath and the surrounding areas and see what the links are."

Frightened city: The recent attacks on women in Bath



- 1 November 1991: An 18-year-old university student was raped in an alley in Bathwick Hill as she walked home from a city centre night club at 1am.
- 2 November 1994: A 27-year-old woman was abducted at 8.15pm as she parked her car outside her home in Beckford Gardens, Bathwick, Bath. Her attacker forced her into her car and drove her to the outskirts of the city and raped her.
- 3 June 1995: Melanie Hall, 26, disappeared after a night out at Cadillac's night club in the city. No money has been taken from Miss Hall's bank account and her black Mini has remained in the car park at the Royal United Hospital where she was a clerical worker.
- 4 June 1996: A 41-year-old woman was attacked as she went to pick up her car in the afternoon at Ham Gardens multi-storey car park in the centre of Bath. A knife was placed to her throat, but she struggled and her assailant ran off, cutting her hand.
- 5 31 October 1996: A hooded man tried to get into the car of a 22-year-old woman in Sidney Mews, Bath. She looked the door and drove off.
- 6 About two hours later on 31 October 1996 a 16-year-old girl was dragged into an alley in Rosemount Lane, Bath, and raped at knifepoint by a masked assailant.

People expect rapists to be on the loose in other cities, not here

Rosemount Lane is a quiet road that drops into a valley on the outskirts of the spa city of Bath.

On one side of the lane is a field with apple trees and a weeping willow. On the other are large detached homes built out of local sandstone. On the night of Thursday 31 October something happened in Rosemount Lane that has thrown the city of 80,000 residents into shock and brought fear to many.

At about 8.45pm a 16-year-old girl was on her way to meet her friend for an evening of Halloween trick-or-treating. But the teenager took a wrong turning and as she neared the bottom of Rosemount Lane she was dragged into an alley by a masked man armed with a knife.

A series of horrific rapes has shocked Bath, reports
Jason Bennetto

In a passage between Daisy Bank and Chestnut Cottage she was raped.

A few hours earlier a 22-year-old woman returning to her car, parked next to the church on the other side of the city, had been approached by a hooded stranger. The man walked up and attempted to get into her car but she managed to lock the doors and drive off.

The fact that detectives are now linking up to a further 10 sexual assaults in Bath plus

two murders in the region and the disappearance of a young woman has had a tremendous impact on what is a privileged community relatively untouched by big-city crime.

David Gledhill, editor of the *Bath Chronicle*, which has offered a £5,000 reward for the capture of the rapist, explained: "Bath is hardly the crime capital of the UK – if someone vandalised a flower bed it makes news."

"That's why what's happened is such a shock to this city. People expect rapists to be on the loose in other cities, but not Bath."

Also writing in his paper he said: "To become the centre of attention not for our heritage nor for our architecture but for a series of horrific crimes is alien to us all."



Black spot: Walton Street in Bath where one of the sexual assaults has taken place

Photograph: Tom Pilton

All the female staff at the *Chronicle* have been issued with rape alarms, a piece of equipment that has become commonplace among the women of Bath in the past month. Jan Hodgkinson, 48, who has lived all her life in Bath, and her daughter, also carry alarms now and always lock their car doors when travelling alone. She said: "It's not a very nice thing to be living with at the moment. Everyone is very nervous and are constantly talk-

ing about it. "People are joining up for self-defence lessons and taking extra precautions."

"It's terrible to think the rapists might be someone shopping next to you in Sainsbury's."

"But it's important not to go overboard about it – if someone gets a kick out of worrying people you have to draw a line between warning them and terrifying them."

Part of the problem many believe is the lack of affordable

parking in the city centre, which forces women to walk to the outskirts often in the dark at the end of the day. However, one of the attacks, in June, involved a woman getting into her car at the Ham Gardens car park in the middle of the day.

The city centre multi-storey is a typical concrete monstrosity which the council has attempted to hide away next to the bus station. But its central location has brought home to many women that they are

vulnerable anywhere in the city.

Younger women and their mothers are particularly cautious now. Vicky Petteimerides, 14, and her school friend Fran Hunt, 14, are no longer allowed to hang around after dark and both intend to get personal alarms. Vicky, who lives in a village just outside Bath, said: "My mum doesn't want me even walking alone in the village."

Fran added: "We're going to see the Christmas lights being

turned on tonight; normally we would stay until 10.30 but mum is picking me up at 8.30."

Erin Houlihan, 19, and Amanda Killgorman, 20, have also changed their lifestyle in the past few months.

"Before I would go out at night and wouldn't think twice about walking home alone, but now we all go around in a big group of people," said Erin.

Amanda added: "Bath is such a quiet town. You don't expect anything terrible to happen in a place like this, do you?"

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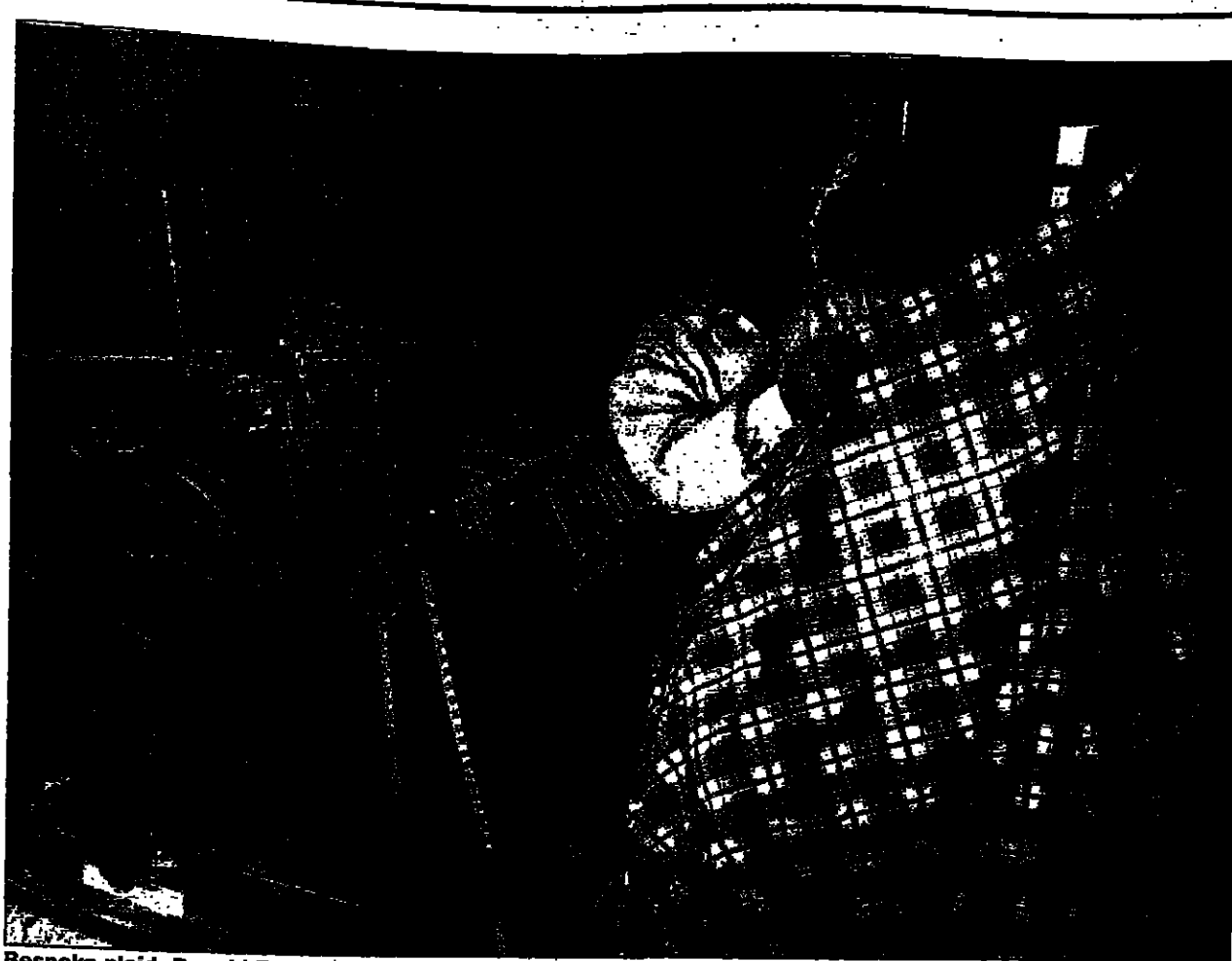
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Bespoke plaid: Donald Fraser, the designer and weaver of the 'Independence' tartan. Photograph: Colin McPherson

Scots open new chapter in fight to reclaim past

James Cusick

The stone has gone home. And now the leader of the Scottish National Party wants the rest of the alleged Celtic booty stolen from Scotland by the English in times past to be returned.

With the Stone of Destiny, stolen as a war trophy by Edward I at the end of the 13th century now being prepared for its St Andrew's Day unveiling in Edinburgh Castle after 700 years of residence in Westminster Abbey, Alex Salmond wants two other ancient artefacts to be brought back to their "rightful homeland".

The SNP leader said he would shortly be tabling questions in the House of Commons for the return of the 9th century *Book of Deer*, an illuminated manuscript held at Cambridge University. He is also claiming the return of the 1,000-year-old Uig chessmen, currently held at the British Museum.

Threatening to turn the "stolen" artefacts into Scotland's own version of the Elgin Marbles (still under dispute by the Greek government) Mr Salmond claims the *Book of Deer* was "pinched" by the English, probably in 1296, the same year that the Stone of Destiny was removed from Scone and taken south.

The *Book of Deer* was written mostly in Latin, probably in the 9th century, at a monastery founded by St Columba at Deer in Buchan. The area is Mr Salmond's parliamentary constituency. It contains 12th century additions also in Latin and Gaelic. The manuscript is mostly gospel texts and there is also an early version of the Apostles' Creed, it also contains a charter given to the monks by David I of Scotland.

For biblical scholars the illuminations included alongside the gospel texts of St John and three other apostles include capitals, borders and pictures of the Evangelists, resembling in details the earlier version of the Irish Gospels.

Its historical importance, however, is greatly increased by its memorandums, the earliest extant Gaelic written in Scotland. These give details of clan organisation, land divisions, monastic land tenure and other monastic accounts.

Mr Salmond described the book as a land register, similar to the Domesday Book, covering the Old Deer and New Deer areas of north-east Scotland. "It is a unique document ... and should be restored to its rightful homeland, where it would be a focal point of cultural, historic and tourist interest."

On the chessmen of Uig, which are made of walrus ivory and discovered at Uig Sands in a cave in 1831, Mr Salmond said these were also "pinched" by the English. The pieces are currently on show in the British Museum.

It is likely that the set of pieces may have been hidden for centuries by nuns from the Benedictine house once in the area.

"These chessmen are said to be 1,000 years old and are almost certainly of Viking origin," said Mr Salmond.

He added: "Just as the Elgin Marbles should be restored to Greece, and a Sioux burial coat, now housed in Glasgow, should be returned to America, so should these two ancient artefacts come home to Scotland."

"There is no justification whatsoever for them to be retained in England," Mr Salmond added.

Clan McEnglish swing it for kilt fit for foreigners

James Cusick

not part of SNP policy.

The first test outing for the new tartan - as a few scarves - was at this year's SNP conference in Inverness. Now Mr Fraser and his wife, Fiona, a garment designer, have taken delivery of 60 metres of the double-width material to make skirts, waistcoats and dresses. A heavy duty cloth is also in the pipeline, crucial for the Scots Anglo who needs that crucial part of Celtic heritage - the kilt.

The irony of the English championing their own tartan will not be lost on historians. After the last rising of the Scottish clans under the banner of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745, the wearing of tartan was banned by law. It was only a visit to Scotland by George IV in 1822 that resurrected tartan culture. Sir Walter Scott, the best copywriter the Scottish tourist industry never officially employed, whipped up tartan fever by ensuring the sovereign saw hundreds of new tartan designs.

The tartan industry has grown to include about 2,500 registered designs, and there could be more to come. Scotland's leading textile college in Galashiels now has computer software - known as Scotweave - to create tartans on screen. The "Independence" is the latest computer-assisted creation.

The Tennaya department store in Okhama, Japan, has one; as has the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh. And, though Prince Charles Edward Stuart might be turning in his grave, the English are also in the club. They, too, have now got their own tartan.

The clan McEnglish does not exist. There is no heraldic ancestry for the McEnglos. But such pedantic familia has not stopped a group of non-native Scottish National Party supporters commissioning a tartan from one of Scotland's leading designers, Donald Fraser, and the "Independence" tartan is now officially registered with the Scottish Tartan Society.

The blue and white of the ancient cloth - to be seen on kilts, scarves and probably golf club covers - signifies the Scottish Saltire (the flag of Scotland); its touches of yellow and black are the colours of the SNP. From his design studio in North Berwick, Mr Fraser said: "I was approached by the group, New Scots for Independence, to design the tartan. I think one of their worries was that in the event of independence they would face repatriation." The tartan is supposed to serve as a symbol of re-assurance that repatriation of English Scots is

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news

Hospital drug error may have damaged baby's brain

Louise Jury

A baby was given 10 times the prescribed amount of morphine for surgery, in a medical blunder which could leave him permanently brain damaged.

Paul Luscombe, a builder, and his wife, Julie, are awaiting the results of further brain scans on their son Kieren following the overdose which occurred during an operation four weeks ago.

Kieren turned blue and suffered severe fits after the mistake and spent some time in intensive care at Treliske Hospital in Truro, Cornwall.

The hospital has faced criticism for poor procedures in the past. It paid damages to the parents of another baby earlier this year after a needle was left in the child's body, and has been criticised for allowing a nurse to take part in an appendix operation. The Luscombes are anxious to highlight the blunder with their child to prevent it happening again.

Mrs Luscombe, 38, of Illogan Highway near Truro, said yesterday: "They are making so many mistakes and they don't

know what they're doing to people's lives. They have destroyed our lives and my baby's life." Kieren was six weeks old when he went in to Treliske for a hernia operation. The hospital has admitted he was given four milligrammes of morphine instead of 0.4 milligrammes.

As Mrs Luscombe watched him on the ward afterwards, he started to turn blue. A nurse took him and dispatched Mrs Luscombe to get more assistance. But she said: "I couldn't find another nurse. I was just screaming for somebody to save my baby. Luckily, there was a doctor who was looking at a leukaemia patient."

Kieren had fits and stopped breathing. Medical staff resuscitated him and he was placed in the intensive care unit. Mrs Luscombe said she was later told they were certain Kieren would live, but did not know the extent of any brain damage. He was still having fits last week.

Mrs Luscombe, who also has two girls, Katy, six, and Georgia, two, said: "I want people to know what is going on. This is my baby, my beautiful baby. I don't know what they've



Anxious wait: Ten-week-old Kieren with his parents, who intend to claim damages against Treliske Hospital for their son's overdose of morphine

Photograph: Marc Hill

done to him. I can't eat, and I can't sleep."

Her solicitor, Philip Snell, has applied for legal aid to pursue a claim for damages against the hospital. But it could be some time before the case is settled

as they wait to see the full consequence of the blunder.

A spokeswoman for the Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust said they were "very sorry" and admitted liability. "It was an error. It was very unfortunate

and the staff were distraught. We deeply regret it."

She said immediate disciplinary action was taken against the medical staff involved - understood to be two nurses - although no details were

being released. The spokeswoman added: "Whenever anything happens we look at procedures as well and reinforce them with everyone. It would be foolhardy not to."

Two years ago, a sister at the

hospital, Valerie Tomlinson, was given a warning about her conduct and put on six months' probation after it was discovered she had taken part in an appendix operation.

Last year, the trust agreed to

pay damages to Steve and Andrew Jones after an independent inquiry confirmed that part of a needle used for testing blood had been left inside their son, Ben, for nine days soon after his birth at Treliske.

Threat to sue over twin's death

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children admitted yesterday that a six-week-old baby had not been seen by a doctor in the hours leading up to his death. In November 1995, Hussein Mohammad underwent pioneering surgery at the hospital to separate him from his Siamese twin brother.

Later, despite his father's anxiety about his condition, Hussein was not seen by a doc-

tor until he was already dead. Now Ammar Mohammad, his Kuwaiti father, is threatening to sue the hospital over the events, which are catalogued in an internal, confidential report about the death.

A spokeswoman for Great Ormond Street said: "There was a problem on the ward. A new cleaner was not doing her job properly so the floors weren't cleaned up to scratch for a

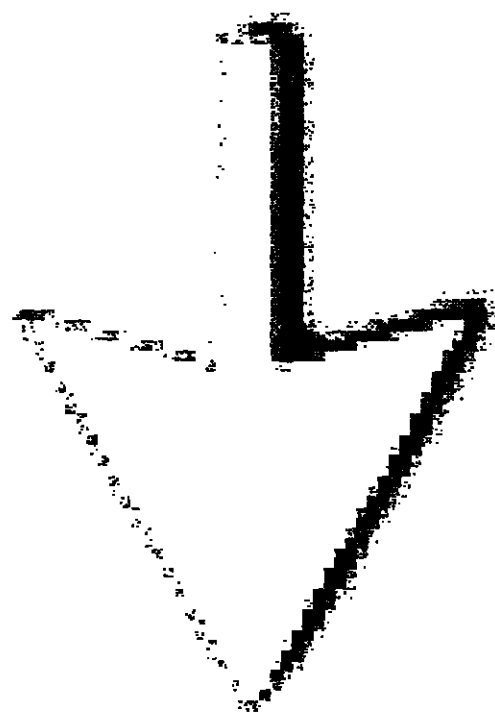
couple of days." The spokeswoman said the doctor responsible for the child had been dealing with an emergency admission, but that Hussein had been his next priority. The baby's temperature had dropped slightly, so a nurse wrapped him up in a blanket to keep him warm.

"A parent's concerns are always taken seriously so the nurses telephoned the doctor

who said he would come as soon as he was finished," the spokeswoman said. "The child's condition was monitored very carefully throughout the day by specialist paediatric nurses and he took a full feed orally for the first time that lunchtime, which was a good sign."

Great Ormond Street Hospital also said that the baby's medical notes had not been updated for four days.

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DAILY POEM

The Park-keeper as Hero

By Peter Bland

*You've painted the swings
bright Calder blue. Kids swoop
sky-high. You mostly stoop,
cursing the intricate floral clock
that breaks your back
four times a year. Left to yourself
you'd plant bamboo. These flowers
are 'petal explosions for the tourist trade'.*

*The river is everywhere. Its light lassoes
the lemon and bougainvillea shoots
you're trying to coax
against a southern wall. It's there
you've placed your 'pensioners' bench' -
a bunched backrow left listening to the band
and applauding the same act day after day ...
the sun, at Putney, doing its dying swan
like an overworked chorus girl in scarlet tights.*

Peter Bland was born in Yorkshire but has spent many years in New Zealand. He is a winner of the Melbourne Arts Festival Literary Award, and of a Cholmondeley Award for his poetry. In 1990 he was runner-up in the Observer/Arvon Foundation International Poetry Competition. His *Selected Poems* are due to be published by Carcanet.

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Primary pupils boost their test results

Judith Judd
Education Editor

National test results for 11-year-olds have improved sharply with between one-half and two-thirds reaching the expected standard, figures released yesterday by the Government show. Last year, the failure of more than half 11-year-olds to reach the expected standard in maths and English caused a political row with Labour blaming the poor results on 17 years of Conservative government. Ministers, who are bracing themselves for a report on maths later this week showing that England is slipping down the international league table, called yesterday's results "encouraging". But some teachers said

the improvements had nothing to do with higher standards: they simply reflected changes made in the tests and schools' growing familiarity with them. In English 58 per cent of pupils scored at or above the expected level compared with 48 per cent last year. In maths, 54 per cent did so compared with 44 per cent last year. In science, where last year's results were better than those in English and maths, the figure was 62 per cent, down from 70 per cent. Results for 7- and 14-year-olds remained at much the same level as before: more than four-fifths reaching the expected standard in 7 subjects, one-half and two-thirds in 14. Cheryl Gillan, Schools Minister, said: "This year's results are en-

What the 11-year-olds were asked

ENGLISH: What's the best thing about autumn? Write your own story about one day suddenly starts to rain. What do you think of the story? What's the best thing about autumn? Write your own story about one day suddenly starts to rain. What do you think of the story?	MATHS: This question cannot be answered using a calculator. a) 12 divided by 3 b) 12 divided by 3 What is the value of 100?	SCIENCE: Weighing bricks. Purple weigh bricks using a forcemeter. In air the forcemeter reads 3.5N with the rubber brick, 50N with the house brick. In water the forcemeter reads 10N with the rubber brick, 12N with the house brick. Complete the table to show the forcemeter readings. a) The forcemeter spring is stretched when a brick is hung on it. Name the force which pulls down the brick.
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couraging. They confirm that our 11-year-olds are doing better as teachers build on the first year of 11-year-old tests. But there is no room for complacency; we must do better." David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, said: "The fact that 40 per cent of 11-year-olds are failing to reach the expected reading or maths level for their age, representing over 200,000 children, is a serious indictment of the Government's record on education over the last 18 years." The tests were changed this year after teachers' criticisms that there was too much reading in English, not enough time in maths and that science was easier than the other two. Anne Barnes, general secretary of the National Association for the Teaching of English, said: "Claims

that things are better or worse are nonsensical. Once you have a norm, you have to adjust it when you discover children aren't reaching it. That's what has happened here. In addition, teachers are teaching to the test. The fact that children have got better at doing the tests doesn't mean that they are better at English." A spokesman for the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority refuted the idea that the tests were easier this year. "In two areas in particular - English for seven-year-olds and science for 11-year-olds - they are harder." A survey by the SCAA shows that three-quarters of schools revised for the tests this year, almost certainly an increase on last year. Eighty per cent of 11-year-olds surveyed thought the tests were a good idea and the same percentage of teachers said that external marking had made them more manageable. After last year's results, Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, announced that league tables for primary schools would be published for this year's results. David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said that schools were "performing very well, despite all the pressure of shortage of resources and an over-loaded curriculum". Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said that Mrs Shephard should apologise to the profession for her unfair criticism of them last year.

A knot of Bonds salute film legend

Louise Jury

A trio of James Bonds led the tributes to the legendary film producer "Cubby" Broccoli yesterday at a memorial service held where he would have felt at home - at the cinema. Crowd barriers and the paparazzi snapping Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton and the latest 007, Pierce Brosnan, lent the service at the Odeon in the West End of London the atmosphere of a movie premiere. "We're thrilled to be part of the legend," the famous special agents said. Albert Broccoli, who produced 17 Bond films, died last June at his home in Beverley Hills, California, at the age of 87, but his friends and family decided that the memorial service should be held in Britain. A spokeswoman for his production company, Eon, said: "He spent more than 40 years living and working in London and a lot of people wanted to do something here." With Lois Maxwell, the original Miss Moneypenny, Desmond Llewellyn, the gadget scientist Q, and Shirley Eaton, immortalised in gold paint in the film *Goldfinger*, also in the audience, the James Bond fans who gathered outside could barely contain their excitement. Broccoli's wife, Dana, organised yesterday's service and his daughter, Barbara, and stepson, Michael Wilson, are working on the next Bond film.



Bonding time: Pierce Brosnan greeting 007 fans at Leicester Square where the memorial was held yesterday, watched over by Cubby Broccoli Photograph: Mykel Nicolau

Labour MP says whip blocked inquiry

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

First-hand evidence of the way in which a government whip is alleged to have blocked a full-scale probe into the Neil Hamilton affair is to be provided to the Commons Committee on Standards and Privileges. There was increasing speculation among MPs last week that the trail of the alleged cover-up could reach beyond the Whips' Office, to the Cabinet Office and even No 10. During the questioning of former whip David Willets last Tuesday, Labour MP Dale Campbell-Savours mentioned that there had been a 1994 meeting between Chief Whip Richard Ryder, Michael Heseltine and John Major about Mr Hamilton, the former Tory minister alleged to have accepted cash for questions from Mohamed al-Fayed, the owner of Harrods. It was alleged last week that Andrew Mitchell, a government whip, used his privileged position on the former Members' Interests Committee to provide inside information on the Hamilton case to Mr Ryder. But Angela Eagle, a Labour member of the former Members' Interests Committee, which was supposed to carry out the initial investigation into the into complaints laid against Mr Hamilton, went even further in a weekend interview. Ms Eagle is now certain to be asked to provide evidence on what happened in the committee. She told Channel 4's *A Week in Politics* that Mr Mitchell had been the primary advocate of not pursuing allegations "which involved Harrods vouchers and alleged envelopes full of cash". "We could make no progress," she said. "We were not allowed to look at the evidence. We were prevented from hearing witnesses... I felt at the time... that the whip was the main instigator of these blocking manoeuvres." A separate investigation is being carried out by Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, into the allegations about Mr Hamilton opened up following the collapse of his libel action against *The Guardian*.

Hacking wave targets the campus computer

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

British businesses and universities are coming under concerted attack from hackers, according to a senior computer expert. He says that an average of one computer is being hacked into each day - and that the real figure could be 25 times higher. In some cases the hackers could be accessing sensitive corporate information without the real users being aware of it, said Dennis Jackson, the coordinator of the UK's Computer

Emergency Response Team (CERT), which acts both as a clearing house and informal investigation team for hacking incidents. A team of hackers contacted *The Independent* last week to claim that they broke into the CERT computer system 10 days ago and copied a number of programs which they found there. They said these "could and will be used to attack systems in the future. Many of these tools are highly sophisticated and will allow new systems to be breached, which were previously regarded as highly secure." But Mr Jackson denied that any such breach had occurred, although information sent to *The Independent* suggested that the hackers had accessed his electronic mail account. They forwarded a copy of an electronic mail message from a military source in the United States to Mr Jackson which answered a query from the CERT about a possible hacking method. Mr Jackson did acknowledge though that the threat from hackers is intensifying with the

growth of computer use in the United Kingdom. "There are probably about 300 or 400 computer break-ins each year, and experiments by the US Defense Department show that only 4 per cent of intrusions are discovered. You can work it out how many that makes," he said. The attacks are not limited to the academic sector, which is traditionally low on security. Mr Jackson said: "Internet service providers are easy targets, but there have been a small number in the industrial sector." The hackers did sometimes penetrate into commercial systems with valuable information, he said. British hackers are also becoming more accomplished, he acknowledged. "There may have been a disproportionate increase in the UK because they have at last learnt what their US competitors can do. For some time hackers in this country seemed comparatively clueless, compared with the US ones." Celebrated US hackers include Kevin Mitnick, who was arrested in 1994 after evading the police. He was thought to

have downloaded thousands of credit card numbers from a company's database, though it was not thought he ever used any of them. Other US hackers created programs which generated valid credit card numbers for any company, and spread them on the Internet. The group which claimed to have broken into CERT's computers told *The Independent* that their purpose was simply to "see what investigations were ongoing". Their advice to CERT was "tighten up your security". Mr Jackson said that if the break-in was confirmed it would be "very embarrassing". There is not yet any industrial equivalent of CERT and business problems do not attract CERT's attention "because our funding doesn't come from them". A joint body, with industry funding, would be "a marvellous idea", Mr Jackson said. Hacking constitutes a crime under the Computer Misuse Act, though companies which knowingly operated lax computer security might be liable to prosecution under the Data Protection Act.

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City corporations challenged by people power as East Enders seek a share in their future

Citizens of poor London boroughs are taking action to secure a contract on jobs, reports **Stephen Goodwin**

This week will bring a defining moment for "citizens' power" when the poor of east London try to strike a contract on jobs with the corporations whose glass temples tower above them.

A revived form of civic politics has already established itself in a handful of urban areas, winning modest changes in supermarket policies, altering police tactics and forcing councils to clear illegal tips.

But the launch on Wednesday in Bethnal Green of The East London Communities Organisation (Telco) ushers in a more ambitious agenda.

On the platform, if Telco's approaches have paid off, will be executives from the companies that control the destiny of much of east London - Canary Wharf Ltd; London & Continental Railways, builders of the Channel rail link; Spitalfields Development Group; and AMEC, developers of the new London Hospital.

Before an expected audience of 1,300 local people, the companies will be invited to work with Telco over the next five years to ensure that an agreed proportion of the jobs they create will be reserved for residents of four of Britain's poorest boroughs - Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Waltham Forest.

Leaving the boardroom to rub shoulders with their disadvantaged neighbours is not a situation to appeal much to businessmen and Telco is anxious not to give the impression that they will be harassed. Fighting talk is eschewed, even if the York Hall where they will meet is best known as a boxing venue.

"We don't want to be confrontational. First we need to build a relationship with people," Jason Wu said, explaining how Telco's approach differs from that single-issue pressure groups.

Mr Wu practices with the



Citizen gain: Members of Telco, from St Margaret's church in Canning Town, outside Pura Foods, where their intervention led to cleaner emissions

Photograph: David Rose

London Buddhist Community at Bethnal Green, one of the latest groups to join forces with the churches, mosques, Sikh gurdwaras, tenant groups and schools which fund Telco. Organisers would like to draw in trade union branches but so far the brothers have proved too politically hidebound. Unison would be a natural ally in an area where so many are dependent on public services.

In the argot of citizen organising, Telco wants to build relationships with the power players of east London - busi-

ness leaders, local authorities, health services and MPs - and then hold them to account.

"Often we find people are willing to begin a dialogue if they are given a chance. But we are going to be strong on the power players having to recognise the community, and, unlike single-issue groups, we are not going to go away," Mr Wu said.

Telco is the sixth broad-based citizen body to be formed since 1990, trying to recreate a sense of shared responsibility and fill the vacuum left by neutered local government. Last week, 300

leaders from the 20 diverse groups that make Trefnu Cymunedol Cymru, the only rural citizens' body, met to report on their work on pollution, drug-misuse services and access for the disabled in north-east Wales.

Despite the predominant church and mosque membership, Telco is not a religious organisation. As Neil Jamieson, its lead organiser, pointed out, churches are about the only place left in the community where people meet every week and in sizeable numbers.

Cardinal Basil Hume, the

Roman Catholic leader, and Manazir Ahsan, head of the United Kingdom Islamic Foundation, will be at Wednesday's launch. In a message of support, George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, said that "social fragmentation" should be challenged.

The Church Urban Fund is a major contributor to The Citizen Organising Foundation to which the area initiatives are affiliated. Dr Carey describes them as "footsoldiers in a necessary war on fatalism, social division and the decay of hard-won

liberties through lack of use."

Sitting together in Bow Road Methodist Church, the Rev John Whitwell, vicar of St Michael's and St Mary's in Manor Park, Father Tim Hutton of St John the Baptist's in Hackney, and Siraj Salekin of the East London Mosque acknowledge their part in the revival of "social morality".

"Virtually all the established religions have a concept of the way we conduct our lives and there are an awful lot of values in common," Fr Hutton said. "We are picking up on that."

Rev Whitwell said there was a danger of "passivity" in religious communities. "We need to retain the spiritual substance but it needs to be translated into practical concern."

Telco's early "political actions" seem modest to outsiders but have paid dividends locally, particularly persuading Pura Foods to end the smells emitted from its Canning Town factory. Undertakers have promised to peg funeral price rises to inflation and traffic dangers outside a Newham school have been lessened.

Firms put ceiling on ambitions of black managers

Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

White female executives have to put up with a "glass ceiling" at work, but Afro-Caribbean managers are continually hitting their heads against a "cement roof" and employers are doing little or nothing about it.

While white middle-class women face prejudice from their male colleagues, "considerably greater disadvantage" is suffered by managers of West Indian extraction even in Britain's biggest companies, according to a study published today by four leading organisations in the equal opportunities field.

The report's conclusion risks being labelled as politically incorrect. But independent consultants working for organisations including the African and Caribbean Finance Forum, remarked that while companies were prepared to reveal how many women they employed and at what level, they often failed to disclose similar statistics for Afro-Caribbeans. "It was very noticeable that employers had given a higher priority to equality for women than to equality for ethnic minorities."

Using a new analysis of the 1991 Census, the researchers found that the proportion of black people in managerial positions did not exceed half a per cent in any industrial sector.

Such a low representation could not be attributed to inadequate skills. Some 36 per cent of Afro-Caribbeans have qualifications compared with just 31 per cent of whites. The credentials of black people also tended to be more vocational which employers are thought to prefer, the reports point out.

The researchers found that black people were even under-represented in the management of organisations in public transport and the health service where they form a disproportionately large part of the workforce. They also paint a pessimistic picture of the impact on equal opportunities of privatisation and the general trend towards decentralisation.

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مكتبة الامم

significant shorts

Clinton seeks new accord with China

President Bill Clinton yesterday embarked on a major trip to Asia and the Pacific which the White House hopes will lay the groundwork for a long overdue improvement in relations with China.

After a four-day state visit to Australia, Mr Clinton heads to Manila for a summit of the 18-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation group. But the real business will be during a private meeting with Jiang Zemin, the Chinese President, likely to touch upon issues ranging from human rights and Taiwan to trade and intellectual property rights.

One concrete result would be agreement to hold negotiations to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula. *Washington - Rupert Cornwell*

10,000 protest at Belarus election delay

Belarus police, banging truncheons against their riot shields in a frightening staccato, clashed with demonstrators in the capital Minsk. Witnesses said several people were slightly hurt.

The march, attended by between 5,000 and 10,000 people, was the latest in a series of protests against proposals by President Alexander Lukashenko which would let him extend his term in office by two years without new elections. *Reuters - Minsk*

Army seizes Serb TV mast

A power struggle between Bosnian Serb army and political leaders intensified as civilian authorities accused the military of seizing a television transmitter. The stand-off stems from the decision of the Bosnian Serb President, Biljana Plavsic, to sack commander General Ratko Mladic a week ago - a move the army has refused to recognise.

Bosnian Serb media, under the control of civilian authorities, reported that army officers took control of a transmitter on Mount Zep in eastern Bosnia last Tuesday. They said the seizure prevented Pale-based Serb television from reaching parts of Bosnia's Serb republic. *Reuters - Han Pijesak*

Romania may back reform

Romanians went to the polls against a backdrop of warnings from President Ion Iliescu that victory for his pro-reform rival would spell a return to pre-Communist inequality. Mr Iliescu, a former Communist, accused his main opponent, Emil Constantinescu, of wanting to restore the monarchy and allow pre-war landowners to reclaim their estates. Some polls predicted victory for Mr Constantinescu. *Adrian Bridge*

Protester eats summit words

Protesters disrupted the final news conference at the UN-sponsored World Food Summit in Rome. President Fidel Castro of Cuba watched as one woman appeared to try to stuff the summit declaration into her mouth. Three women stripped naked in front of the US Agriculture Secretary last week to protest against genetically manipulated soybeans. *Reuters - Rome*

The high peak of publicity

A village in eastern Switzerland is giving away a mountain to win publicity for its new thermal baths. A contest launched by civic leaders in Vals, a village of 900 inhabitants, offers the winner the honour of naming the peak of nearly 9,000 feet.

Pius Truffer, chairman of the baths, said anyone could enter. The winner's name would be entered in the land register. *Reuters - Zurich*

Refugees abandon camps to the rats

Gisenyi - Mugunga has spilled forth its people and lies spent, silent and in ruins. The only sound is the rustling of rats claiming territory, as vultures circle.

They are not obvious at first. But within this deserted 20-square-kilometre camp - one of the largest refugee settlements in the world - perhaps 100 of the 500,000 who lived here are left behind.

They are the weakest and they gaze with empty eyes; a crippled old man who eats hungrily on biscuits that are offered and a sick baby, abandoned to die by the side of the road, his face covered in flies.

They may live if help comes in time but that is not certain. Only a few aid organisations are being allowed by Rwandan-backed Zairean rebels to cross into Zaire and their movements are restricted. Zaire and Rwanda, both anxious that new camps are not established during this mass exodus from eastern Zaire, insist aid efforts are concentrated on the Rwandan side of the border - the wrong side for the weakest in Mugunga.

"It is extraordinary," said a frustrated Wendy Driscoll, of the charity Care. "The aid organisations are being allowed less access than journalists. The governments want aid concentrated in Rwanda but that should not mean leaving people to die by the roadside."

There are other signs that it is the strongest - and even the brutal - who survive. Beyond Mugunga, on the road to Saki, lies a row of abandoned cars, believed to belong to retreating members of the Interahamwe, the Hutu militia, who brought two million Rwandan Hutus into exile into Zaire in 1994 after engineering and overseeing the genocide of 800,000 Tutsis. The ground by the cars is

The human tide has overwhelmed would-be helpers, writes Mary Braid

carpeted with a strange confetti, identity cards torn into tiny pieces. It is the same on the Zairean side of the small border crossing from Goma into Gisenyi. Hundreds of pieces of torn paper are scattered on the ground.

It was believed that the 70,000-strong Interahamwe could never return to Rwanda. But fleeing the rebel forces, it appears some guilty of genocide have been forced to take their chances back home. They seem to be attempting to discard their identities and melt into the crowd.

Rwanda is a small country but disappearing or reinventing oneself there might be easier than once thought. The spontaneous return of Hutus in such great numbers - it is now estimated that 700,000 refugees will eventually travel this road home - opens up unexpected opportunities for militiamen.

The mass return caught aid



Homeward bound: Thousands of Rwandan Hutus head through Goma in Zaire en route for the border after leaving their refugee camps at Mugunga and Saki where they had spent the past two years. Photograph: John Parkin/Reuters

agencies off guard and notions of orderly, gradual repatriation or registration have been abandoned because of the sheer force of numbers.

For 15 miles either side of the border, vehicles must push a path through a human blizzard. The refugees part just long enough to let a vehicle through before devouring the space opened up behind, just for an instant. The human throng sails past transit camps, created for the orderly reintegration of returnees. They lie virtually deserted. The throng has taken on its own momentum and is making its own way home. Nothing seems to stand in the way of the

collective will. In the endless stream of people a tiny boy with just one shoe stands screaming. Like hundreds of others he is being carried along in the crowd and separated from his mother. No one stops. No one seems to notice. The crowd pushes on. He is eventually rescued by an aid worker.

The aid agencies seem absolutely overwhelmed by the phenomenon. Ray Wilkinson, spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees suggests it would be pointless - even dangerous - to interfere. But in this unregulated stream there is ample opportunity to return unno-

ticed to Rwanda; and perhaps avoid the expected return to the old home village.

For some refugees former homes lie just across the border. For others another long hard trek lies ahead. Anyone old enough to walk carries almost impossibly huge loads. Five-year-olds with a stoicism of adults carry siblings on their backs, for miles.

Women drag goats on rope and sick relatives are pushed on bicycles. The road is clouded by smoke from a thousand campfires as exhausted refugees take a break. At nightfall these Hutus lie side by side, covered by UN plastic sheeting, turning

miles of roadside blue.

A handful of children have died of dehydration and exhaustion since the great return began on Friday but most are remarkably healthy given last week's dire predictions about conditions in Mugunga.

Damien Personnaz, of Unicef, said yesterday that while the condition of the first refugees to come through Goma was good, the health of those who followed was worse. Many of them were Zaireans seeking refuge from the continuing conflict and Rwandan refugees from other broken camps further north.

"Those arriving now have travelled further," he said. "And they did not come directly from Mugunga where at least there was food and water."

Last night there were conflicting reports about cholera. One of Goma's three hospitals reported 70 suspected cases but Mr Personnaz said there were no confirmed cases and no signs of an epidemic.

Aid will be desperately needed to resettle the refugees and help Rwanda heal bitter divisions following the genocide. Is an international military force really still what is needed in this dramatically altered situation? "That's a very good question," said Mr Personnaz.

Force may no longer be needed

Stuttgart (Reuters) - Countries planning to send troops to Zaire meet in Germany on Wednesday to review the force's size and mandate now that Rwandan refugees are going home, the US military said.

About 1,000 US troops were due to be sent to Zaire to help 1.5 million Hutu Rwandan refugees. France has pledged 1,000 soldiers, Britain at least a battalion, and Spain is sending 300 Legionnaires. But the

return of Hutu refugees to Rwanda in the past couple of days has lessened the need for a costly multinational force. By the time foreign troops may be ready to deploy next week, more than half the 1.1 million Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire are expected to have returned home voluntarily.

British ministers consider today if it is worth sending troops after a 43-member reconnaissance party reports

back. At least 1,000 British troops could be in Zaire by the end of the week. But Nicholas Soames, the armed-forces minister, said British troops would only be sent out "if there is a real job to do".

Raymond Chretien, the UN special envoy on the crisis, said that a military force was still needed. But South Africa's Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, said the terms of the mission needed to be changed. His com-

ments reflected dissatisfaction among Africans with the way the force had been organised.

"We do not need the sort of numbers that have been spoken of," he said.

Rwanda's Prime Minister, Pierre Celestine Rwigema, said the force should be scrapped, and its budget spent on re-settling the refugees in Rwanda. Kenya and other African countries have complained they were not consulted.

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international

US veto may spell end for Boutros-Ghali

New York—After weeks of diplomatic shadow-boxing, members of the United Nations Security Council are expected this morning to begin formal consideration of the fate of UN Secretary General, Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Mr Boutros-Ghali is intent on winning a second term. But if there is a first show of hands taken on a proposal to re-appoint him, the US Ambassador, Madeleine Albright, may well deliver her government's long-promised blocking vote against his re-election.

There seems scant chance that Mr Boutros-Ghali will take such a veto as a cue to retire. "Rumours to the effect that Boutros-Ghali will withdraw are false," Ahmed Fawzi, the

Security Council set to decide fate of UN chief today. David Osborne reports

Secretary General's personal spokesman said.

The festering dispute over Mr Boutros-Ghali—who faces the humiliation of becoming the first Secretary General in the UN's history not to win a second five-year term—could escalate before being resolved. But some decision must be made before 31 December, when his first term expires.

The procedure in the Security Council for selecting a secretary general requires votes to be taken until there is a candidate acceptable to the majority and to the five permanent members. So far, the US

appears immovable on the subject, but is virtually alone in its efforts to oust the incumbent.

Since his re-election, President Bill Clinton has received letters—reputedly from President Nelson Mandela, President Jacques Chirac, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and the Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien—asking him to reconsider his position. A resolution calling for the extension of Mr Boutros-Ghali's term has been tabled by Egypt, Guinea Bissau and Botswana.

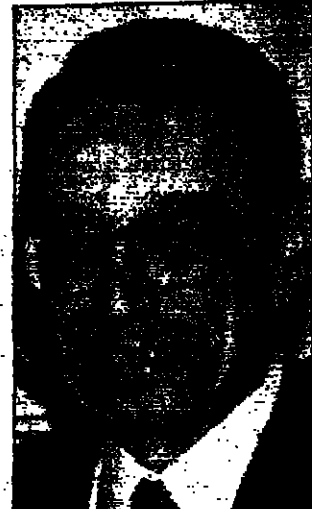
Any manoeuvring, over the next few days, though, will focus on the US. Speculation still

persists that Washington could conclude that its unpopular move would benefit from a final compromise, perhaps in the form of a one- or two-year extension for Mr Boutros-Ghali. In secret, the US offered a one-year extension to Mr Boutros-Ghali earlier this year, but he turned it down.

American antagonism to the former Egyptian foreign minister stems in part from the belief that he has been insufficiently resolute in forcing reforms in the UN. Behind that, however, lies the conviction that only the "beheading" of Mr Boutros-Ghali would be enough to assuage Congressional hostility to the organisation and lead to the release of unpaid US dues for it.

In the meantime, the list of possible replacements for Mr Boutros-Ghali grows. Some 30 names are in circulation. Because of a convention that gives each continent a two-term hold on the Secretary-Generalship, it is generally assumed that Africa—Mr Boutros-Ghali's continent—will have the edge in providing candidates.

Two Africans most commonly mentioned are Salim Salim, the head of the Organisation of African Unity, and Kofi Annan, a senior UN official in charge of peacekeeping from Ghana. As yet, there is no name that has fired anything close to general enthusiasm, so Mr Boutros-Ghali is probably calculating that he has nothing to lose from holding on.



Boutros-Ghali: Fighting to secure a second term

Juppé sees off threat of union protests

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

One year on, the movement of strikes and protests that paralysed France last winter is broken. As of this weekend, the French government has the answer to the question that has dominated its thinking since ministers returned from their summer holidays.

But the government is not out of the woods. Influential groups such as the doctors still look menacing, and a new threat lurks which may prove as deadly as renewed industrial protest: a gathering revolt against corruption in the political establishment.

This double message emerged from two days of trade union strikes and protests over the weekend to mark the first anniversary of the welfare re-

forms proposed by the prime minister, Alain Juppé.

The demonstrations on Saturday attracted far fewer people than even the most poorly attended last winter. In central Paris, fewer than 10,000 people mustered for a mile-long march. In Marseille, which had been a hotbed of rebellion last winter with strikes and marches over-lasting those in Paris by several weeks, only 4,000 people turned out. Only at Aurillac, in the Massif Central, which stands to be severely affected by defence cuts, did the numbers approach those of last year.

Strikes called for the previous day either failed to materialise or caused only limited disruption. Local transport in Paris ran almost normally, despite a tube-drivers' strike. The national railways ran normally. Only Air France (Europe), formerly the domestic airline, Air Inter, suffered serious difficulties, but the airline has been troubled ever since its merger with Air France and, in a sign of things to come, new private airlines laid on extra flights.

A banking sector strike brought out fewer than 20 per cent of the workforce, partly

thanks to a government announcement that it was shelving the privatisation of one state-owned bank, CIC.

Discord among the major trade unions is one reason why the anniversary protests flopped so badly. Another is the lack of a single, specific objective now that the kernel of the welfare reform has gone through parliament and the contentious issue of pensions is off the agenda.

A further reason is the fear of losing pay and job security. Calling demonstrations on Saturdays has been one solution, but this has reduced both the turnout and the publicity.

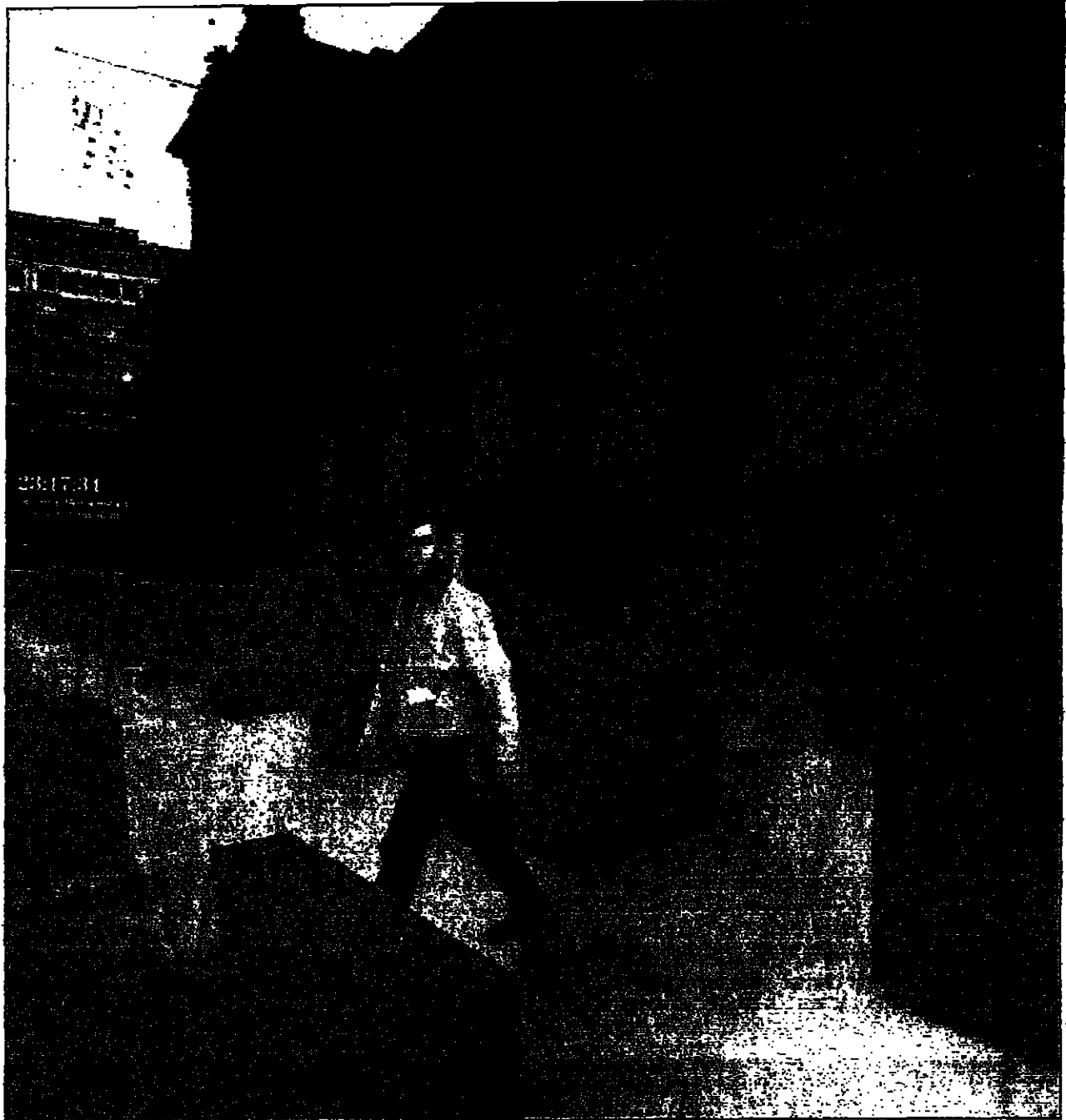
Perhaps the main reason why this year's protests have so far had so little effect, however, is the speed with which the government has moved to pre-empt protests in individual sectors and prevent them coalescing, as they did last year, into a cross-sector movement capable of gaining public sympathy.

As well as retreating on the CIC bank, the government postponed a new rail restructuring programme, and the Paris authorities gave transport workers bonuses that they would lose in the event of strikes.

It may be premature for the government to rejoice, though. The popular protest is not so much dissolving as changing, shifting away from the single target of the "Juppé plan" to something more general and potentially more damaging.

With revelations about corruption in business and political circles multiplying by the week, this cause could unite easily as many people as last year's protests, including the middle class and small business.

On Saturday the justice minister admitted that he chartered a helicopter to trace a judge holidaying in Nepal at a crucial point in a corruption investigation, with the suspicion that he wanted to influence the outcome. Since no sanction has been even mooted, the government is well on the way to being discredited. And when the widespread belief is that the minister made his "confession" only to protect the prime minister, the elite's defences are starting to fail.



First call: Decoration outside the stock exchange in Frankfurt in preparation for today's flotation of the German telephone company Deutsche Telekom, the country's biggest ever privatisation. Photograph: Bernd Kammerer/AP

Britain set to pay dearly if 48-hour deal is struck

Sarah Helm
Brussels

The Government will have to cede new powers to Europe, probably over immigration and frontier controls, if there is to be a deal on the 48-hour working week, British officials have admitted.

Sources believe they may win concessions on the working-hours rules in the present Maastricht reform talks but concede privately that this will only happen if the Prime Minister delivers some painful trade-offs.

And these will probably be far more loathsome to Euro-sceptics than the 48-hour maximum working week.

Few issues of sovereignty are so jealously guarded by British Euro-sceptics as immigration, asylum and frontier controls. But France and Germany have made it clear that pooling more powers in this area will be one of their priorities in the Inter-Governmental Conference

(IGC) on European reform.

France and Germany believe that curbing illegal immigration and countering international criminals necessitates far broader cross-border co-operation. More integration is almost certain to be the price they will demand for an opt-out or re-writing of the working-hours directive. If the Government will not join other member-states in consenting to this further tranche of integration, it will be told it must at least lift its veto, in order to allow others to go ahead without Britain.

As another price for concessions on working hours, Britain's partners are also signalling they may use their new lever, provided by the working-hours dispute, to increase pressure on Britain to allow a more "flexible" approach to integration. So far the Government is adamantly against its partners' terms for "flexibility", because it means a reduction of the British veto, and the relegation

of Britain to a slow lane. Voices in John Major's government admit his tough stand on working hours has weakened Britain's negotiating position when it comes to final trade-offs in the IGC.

This analysis supports the view that Mr Major's latest "battle" with Europe is simply political posturing in the run up to the election campaign. The IGC, launched to rewrite the Maastricht Treaty, does not end until June.

Mr Major hopes his latest "battle" will help him win the election, which must take place by May. If the Conservatives lose, it will be Tony Blair who will sign the final IGC treaty, and he does not intend to contest the directive.

What has bemused Britain's partners in the wake of the European Court's decision upholding the 48-hour working week is Mr Major's assertion that his new fight with Europe is somehow "winnable". A Commission official said: "That

is not how European negotiations work. There are no winners and losers; there is always a compromise."

A Whitehall source admitted: "At the end of the IGC there is bound to be a deal. There are always trade-offs. Given the Prime Minister's tough position on working hours, we will have to compromise on something else significant."

Many observers in Brussels believe it was counter-productive for Britain to fight so hard on the working-hours issue, as there is the evidence that the political climate in several member-states is shifting against further social regulation.

Even inside the European Commission, which has previously been keen to promote new social legislation, there are signs of a new mood of caution. "In many ways Britain has already won this argument. So why go on fighting and causing trouble in the IGC?" a Commission official said.

Hungarians rejoice in their grave obsession

Adrian Bridge
Budapest

Cult of the dead gives insight into a tragic history

Hungary's "season of the dead" may be winding to a close, but as dusk falls, Budapest's National Cemetery comes alive with little flickers of light from the candles commemorating some of the country's most famous (and infamous) sons. A couple at the lavish construction honouring Count Bathany (of 1848 and the abortive anti-Habsburg revolt fame) bow their heads and shed silent tears.

Near by, schoolchildren completed a tour of the graves with a few words from their teacher at the tomb of János Kádár, the Communist who rode to power on the back of the Soviet tanks which crushed the 1956 uprising. With politicians, poets and revolutionaries all together, the cemetery

serves as a perfect backdrop to Hungary's frequently tragic history and not a day passes without coachloads coming to pay respects. "Remembering the dead keeps us connected to our past," said Jeno Ladanyi, director-general of Budapest's 14 cemeteries. "But we Hungarians are a cemetery-going people... we like to mourn."

The obsession with the dead is legendary. "See, brethren, with your own eyes what we are, merely dust and ashes we are," run the opening lines of Halotti Beszéd, a 12th-century burial sermon drilled into schoolchildren. Much of the country's greatest literature is steeped in references to the dead and dying; the national anthem might be described as a dirge. While other East Europeans took to the

streets to overthrow their oppressors in 1989, Hungary celebrated the transfer of power with a funeral: the official reburial of Imre Nagy and other executed heroes of the 1956 uprising whose rehabilitation marked the death-knell of the Communist regime.

For years, moreover, Hungary has had the highest suicide rate in the world. Cemetery-visiting is popular all year round but peaks during the "season of the dead", the three-week period around All Saints' and All Souls' days on 1 and 2 November. Commemorations begin on 23 October, a national holiday marking the 1956 uprising and those who died. They reach a climax on the two holy days, when, having spruced up the family plot, Hungarians lay flowers and wreaths

and meditate and read poetry at graves. The devoted carry on for another week or two.

For some Hungarians, part of the explanation for the extraordinary importance of death rituals here is the country's long record of defeats in war—to the Turks, Tatars and Habsburgs—and the failure of the two uprisings of 1848, against the Habsburgs, and in 1956, against the Russians.

"These burial customs are rooted in the collective consciousness," said the Rev Gyula Paradi of Budapest's Ferencvaros Church. "When a nation suffers a series of traumatic losses like Hungary has... it seems we are always in mourning."

But isn't all this dwelling on the dead a trifle morbid? Certainly, said

Zsuzsa Tatrai, an ethnographic researcher at the Hungarian National Academy of Sciences. "Instead of investing all that time, money and energy on the dead, people should really start treating their living family members better while they are still alive."

But others disagree. Eszter Vecsei, an art historian, said the elaborate death and cemetery ceremonies have a unique spiritual and aesthetic quality, reflecting the "rhapsodic" nature of the Hungarian soul. Mr Ladanyi saw it the same way. "The dead can teach us the secrets of life," he said. "Sitting meditating beside a grave, people can consider the successes and failures of one particular individual's life and learn lessons from it. The pity we feel for the dead is passed naturally from one generation to another. It has become part of our culture."

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How to save the world without leaving your high street

Protest politics learn to use the consumer

John Lichfield
Chief Foreign Writer

Why can you not buy Burmese underwear in British Home Stores any more? Why was Clare Short pictured recently beside a man dressed as a prawn? Why is a West Sussex-based toiletries and cosmetics company running a worldwide campaign for minority rights in Nigeria? Why has the ethically in-your-face Co-operative Bank sharply increased its turnover and profits in recent years (up by 34 per cent in 1995)?

The common answer is the creeping globalisation, but also consumerisation, of single-issue protest politics. The causes espoused are many and varied – maybe self-defeatingly so – but the message and methods are broadly the same: you can help to change the world without leaving your own high street.

Tomorrow, the Burma Action Group will hold a rally at the Royal Institution in central London (guest stars will be Glynis Kinnock MEP and the writer John Pilger; the sponsor is *The Independent*) to further its efforts to discourage British tourism to Burma.

Last weekend, the charity Christian Aid held a conference at Central Hall in Westminster as part of its campaign to urge supermarkets in the United Kingdom to improve the economic and social conditions of their Third-World suppliers.

Andrew Simms of Christian Aid says: "Our aim is to give people a tool through which they can grasp that they are directly related to events all around the globe. People vote every time they go to the supermarket."

The plan is to list the stores according to their treatment of poorer countries and allow shoppers to decide which ones to use. (It was to help Christian Aid launch its campaign that Ms Short found herself standing next to a human shellfish.)

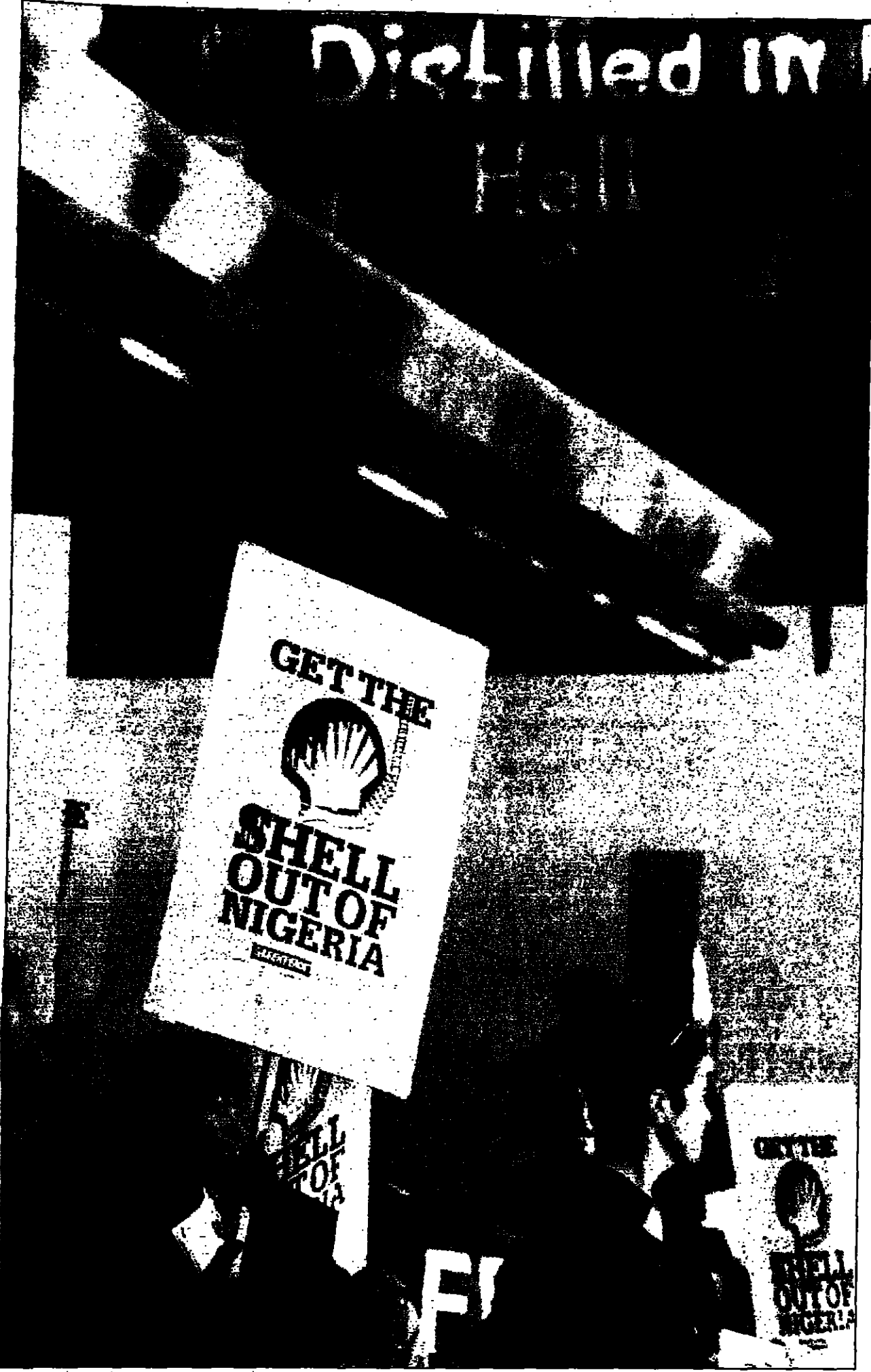
Similarly, the Co-op Bank turned the screw last week in its campaign to shame its high-street competitors into severing links with the arms trade and, specifically, with manufacturers of land-mines. The Co-op's declared supporters range from the singer Luciano Pavarotti to Theresa Gorman MP.

According to the Manchester-based *Ethical Consumer* magazine, there are 36 consumer boycotts in operation in the UK. Most are for environmental or animal welfare causes. But an increasing number – eight at the most recent count – have international political or humanitarian objectives (see panel).

Equivalent protests are mushrooming across Europe and in the United States. They can be divided into three main categories: first, direct boycotts of nations; second, boycotts of companies which trade or invest with controversial countries; and third, a more subtle variation (promoted by Amnesty International, among others), the lobbying of large multinational companies to use their influence to improve respect for human rights in their host countries.

In a sense, none of this is new. Anti-apartheid campaigners made Barclays Bank and Cape fruit impolite words in liberal company in the Sixties and Seventies. At one point in the Seventies it became impossible for a liberal to eat an orange. South African? Chilean? Spanish?

The first and most successful human-rights campaign of all



Pressure point: Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace blockading a Shell garage in a nationwide protest at the company's involvement in Nigeria
Photograph: David Hoffman

their schedules. In the United States, a string of leading clothes companies, including Levi, have cancelled imports from Burma. British Home Stores has also discontinued contracts for Burmese textiles (although the store insists that political pressure was not the reason).

The history of consumer protests – from Barclays and South Africa onwards – is littered with examples of companies being discomfited by association with repressive regimes. It is harder to prove any serious example of successful consumer pressure on the regimes themselves.

South Africa is the great exception. Economic pressure, which began with consumer boycotts and led to disinvestment and the reluctance of international banks to roll over loans, were central factors in the collapse of apartheid.

More recent attempts to mount a consumer boycott against Shell because of its interests in Nigeria had little effect on pump sales. However, coupled with the Brent Spar eco-protests, they did cause a senior Shell International executive, Cor Herkstroter, to admit that the company should pay more attention to consumers' environmental and political concerns. Shell is now said to be considering including references to human rights in a re-drafted statement of its business aims.

Sir Geoffrey Chandler (himself a former senior Shell executive) says that human-rights campaigners tend to exaggerate the political clout of companies; but, equally, large companies tend to play down their capacity to exert political influence.

The giant corporations, such as Shell, have annual turnovers equivalent to the gross domestic product of a dozen Third-World nations; they have the weight to demand from host governments all kinds of concessions on taxes and regulations. They can – and should in their own interest – Sir Geoffrey argues, exert influence for minimum standards of human rights in the countries where they operate.

In their own interests? Human rights promote stability, he argues, and stability always serves the interests of business (arms traders apart). He also argues that association with brutal regimes will increasingly damage a company's good name, and the good name of a company is a precious asset.

In reply to the "imperialist do-gooder" jibe, Sir Geoffrey waves the text of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that basic rights transcend national boundaries and cultures and should be promoted by all individuals and institutions (that is, even by banks and oil companies).

Amnesty does not in itself support, or oppose, economic boycotts of companies or countries. It believes that companies can have more influence by staying in a country and exerting pressure for change. But Sir Geoffrey predicts that it will increasingly become a fact of life that companies which fail to pay heed to humanitarian concerns will fall foul of their customers.

"Take as your guide the environmental lobby. Twenty years ago its influence was minimal. Now almost every company takes it into account as a matter of course. The same will happen in the next 20 years with human rights," he said.

'Our aim is to help people grasp they are directly related to events all round the globe'

But the proliferation of such campaigns in recent years suggests that something is stirring, or maybe a mixture of several things. Sir Geoffrey Chandler, Chairman of the Amnesty International UK Business Group, points to a growing impatience with traditional political structures, coupled with a growing, television-generated appreciation of the humanity of distant peoples.

To this should be added an unheralded aspect of econom-

ic globalism: it makes even obscure regimes vulnerable to the protests – or at least the pinpricks – of Western consumers.

"I think it is fair to say we are witnessing the emergence of a kind of global consciousness, or global conscience, to match the globalism of business and also the globalism of information," Sir Geoffrey said.

Rob Harrison, co-editor of *Ethical Consumer* magazine, makes a similar point: "As business becomes more global and escapes national controls, it is up to the market – in other words the consumer – to impose some kind of minimum acceptable standards."

Does all this amount to anything more than a kind of self-pleasing moralising? Can it really make any difference? If sanctions are ineffective at government-to-government level, can they be effective at people-to-government level? What right have we, in any case, to lecture other countries?

Kevin Myers, one of the more thoughtful right-wing commentators, complained in the *Sunday Telegraph* newspaper recently that the *blan-pensant* liberal-left has taken over the global busybodies of the imperial right, putting pressure on international companies to in-

fluence humanitarian, ecological or economic conditions in the Third World amounts, he said, to advocating "fingernail inspections by a new generation of district commissioner".

Clare Short, Labour's spokeswoman on overseas aid, and a vocal supporter of consumer campaigns, rejects this as "plain stupid".

"Imperialism was about exploiting other peoples. These campaigns are about the opposite. It is about people deciding that they are not going to spend their own money on goods which have been produced in an exploitative way or by, say, using pesticides which leave children crippled. There are potentially powerful forces at work here."

Some unease about what is going on may, nonetheless, be justified. Many human rights groups, including Amnesty International, are dubious about the effectiveness of boycotts. Consumer outrage can appear selective. No one can dispute the vicious disdain for human rights of the military regimes in Burma or Nigeria. But why is there no consumer campaign against China? Or Iran?

Yvette Mahon, of the Burma Action Group, accepts that a human-rights argument could

be made for withholding tourism from many other Third-World countries. "Our argument is that Burma is a special case because its regime is particularly brutal and repressive and it has itself raised the tourist issue by declaring a 'Visit Myanmar Year'."

'People decide they are not going to buy goods that are produced in an exploitative way'

"Beyond that, Burmese people, including children, are being conscripted as slave labour, specifically for schemes to provide facilities for tourists."

How effective is the campaign? The Burmese government says, despite the protests worldwide, that it anticipates a 40 per cent rise in visitors next year. The Burma Action Group confidently predicts no increase in tourism from Britain. Several UK tour companies have already dropped Burma from

Calls for British boycotts

Examples of attempts to harness British consumer power to global, humanitarian or political causes include:

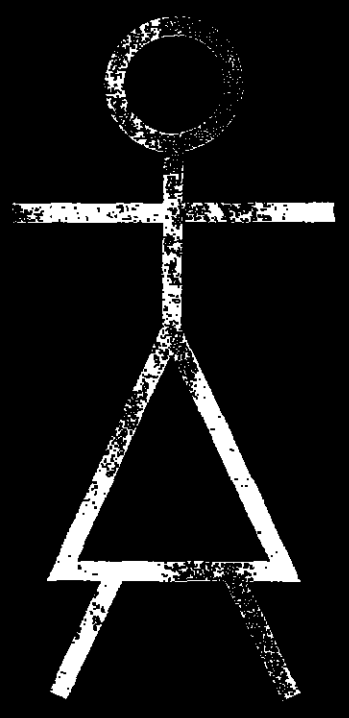
- Calls by Burma Action Group for a boycott on tourism to Burma and a boycott of companies investing there (including Texaco, Total and Pepsi).
- Calls by Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People for a boycott of Shell until more of its oil profits go to local people in southern Nigeria. (To mark the anniversary of Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution, Body Shop is also running a world-wide campaign for his Ogoni people.)
- Boycott by Tibet Support Group (UK) of Holiday Inn for building a hotel in Tibet in partnership with the Chinese government.

- A Manchester-based grass-roots, student-run protest – Lloyds and Midland Boycott (Lamb) – which is urging young people to boycott two of Britain's largest banks because of their alleged commercial links with repressive Third-World regimes.
- Calls by Palestine Solidarity Campaign for a boycott of Israeli produce.
- Calls by Western Sahara Campaign for a boycott of tourism to Morocco.
- Boycott by Survival International of the Texaco oil company for alleged exploitation of tribal lands in the Ecuadorian Amazon.
- Calls by Kurdistan Information Group for a tourism boycott on Turkey.

Source: *Ethical Consumer* magazine 0161 226 2929



Teamwork: Clare Short and shellfish at the launch of Christian Aid's shop campaign



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international

Sleaze on top in Thailand's dirty poll

Stephen Vines

In a flurry of unprecedented vote-buying, violence and an ugly and far from typical burst of anti-Chinese racism, Thai voters yesterday appeared to have given their mandate to the former army commander who is believed to have been the driving force behind the most dirty election in two decades.

Although he is unlikely to command an overall majority, General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh may get the chance he has long waited for to become prime minister, as the Thai system gives the party with the highest number of votes the right to head the government.

The stakes were especially high in this election, as constitutional changes will soon end a system which has resulted in a change of government almost every year. This is bad news for politicians like General Chavalit and his New Aspiration Party; they encourage swapping of political allegiances and other practices which have en-

gendered such cynicism about politicians among the voters.

However, the Thai electoral heartland is in the countryside where knowledge of political manoeuvring is limited. In the capital, Bangkok, General Chavalit's party and its allies received very little support.

The Bangkok polls were swept by the Democratic Party, led by Chuan Leekpai, a former prime minister who is committed to political reform and a great deal less corrupt than his main rival.

Because the election has failed to produce a clear winner, the midnight oil was burning last night while the power brokers of Thai politics busily made deals to forge a coalition capable of commanding a parliamentary majority. Even if General Chavalit's party turns out to have won the greatest number of seats, it will not be enough to govern alone. The horse-trading may last weeks.

Much depends on another former prime minister, Chatichai Choonhavan, whose Chat



At the helm: The former prime minister Chatichai Choonhavan and his wife, Boonruel, after voting yesterday in Thailand's general election. He won enough seats to make or break a majority government. Photograph: Reuters

Pattana party won enough seats to make or break a majority government. Mr Chatichai presided over the economic boom of the late 1980s before being overthrown in the military coup of 1991. At the time, his departure was not much lamented because his government was mired in corruption scandals. But the outgoing govern-

ment of Banham Slip-archa has raised the level of scandal to new and dizzying heights, making Mr Chatichai seem not too bad in comparison.

Reports have been flooding in from the poor north-eastern provinces about vote-buying and unprecedented intimidation. The Thai Farmers Bank estimated that 20bn baht (£520m)

was paid out to voters in electoral bribes. Banks reported a severe shortage of 100 baht (£2.50) notes – the usual payment for a vote.

General Chavalit has a strong grip on the electorate in the north-east. In the course of the election campaign, he built alliances with a host of politicians defecting from the out-

going Banham government – most of them closely linked to the scandals responsible for its downfall.

Mr Chuan's party is not free of corrupt alliances, but he himself is viewed as "clean" and appears to have eschewed the habit of vote-buying.

However, the Democrats have been accused of dirtying their hands with anti-Chinese racism, an alarming development for South-East-Asia's highly assimilated Chinese community. As Mr Chuan himself looks distinctly Chinese, and Sino-Thais are prominent in the party, the accusation seems paradoxical. But the re-emergence of racism in Thai politics has taken many observers by surprise. Although the leading contenders for the prime minister's post participated in US-style presidential television debates for the first time, it is hard to spot the real ideological difference between parties.

The only difference is in integrity. The influential Bangkok business community has long been seen as capable of being less corrupt and more business-like government.

Among the rural population, questions of integrity mean little. Voters there have little contact with the political manoeuvring in the capital. Some politicians who are regarded as sleazy in Bangkok are seen as helpful and generous leaders in their rural constituencies.

Quiet envoy's struggle with Iraq's worst weapons

In Baghdad, he is vilified as a "killer cowboy" and a baby murderer. In their cheekier moments, colleagues compare him to the Swedish chef from *The Muppet*, a bumbler who speaks in Swenglish. Alternatively, he is the one senior United Nations official with a self-evidently important – and potentially deadly – job to do.

Since the end of the Gulf War, Rolf Ekeus, a quiet-spoken former Swedish diplomat, has been charged with flushing every last weapon of mass destruction out of Iraq. The task even now remains unfinished.

As chairman since 1991 of Unscam, the UN Special Commission on disarmament Iraq (Unscam), he has the final say in determining when Iraq has finally rid itself of its most heinous weapons – its long-range ballistic missiles and its nuclear, biological and chemical warheads. Only then, in theory at least, will the Security Council lift the trade sanctions that have been crippling Iraq since the conflict erupted.

If most departments in the UN are castles of words and unread documents, Unscam, with its heavy reliance on US intelligence, is genuinely hectic. No comparable attempt to disarm a country has been made since the Allies conquered Germany.

To keep the process on course and credible, Mr Ekeus has had to engage in some unusual manoeuvring. Most important has been preserving the unity of the Security Council. Often that has meant painting one picture for the Americans, for instance, who remain hawkish on maintaining sanctions, and another one for the French, the council member most disposed to giving Iraq leeway.

"The most incredible thing is that he always gets away with it," one colleague noted. Trickiest of all have been his dealings with Saddam Hussein's regime. While in the early days Ekeus appeared to trust Mr Ekeus, in recent times the relationship has deteriorated. As the solidity of the US-led alliance against Iraq visibly deteriorates, demonstrated by Washington's go-it-alone attacks in southern Iraq last month, the job of convincing Iraq it must co-operate with the UN becomes more difficult.

And so the rhetoric thrown at Mr Ekeus, widely admired and liked in New York's diplomatic circles, may by then have moved on. Last month, Sweden beat Australia in an election to claim one of the Security Council seats for two years. Mr Ekeus' reward could be his appointment to the Swedish ambassadorship to the UN, and to the occupancy of that coveted seat.

LOCAL HEROES



Rolf Ekeus

Mr Ekeus by Iraq's editorial writers has grown harsher. "Mr Ekeus, we know you are a liar," spat the government newspaper, *al-Jumhuriya* recently. The Swede, it said, was a "killer cowboy, deliberately trying to insult the Iraqi people". He is accused of being the puppet of Washington. In fact, keeping Unscam out of Washington's grasp is hailed by some as Mr Ekeus' principle achievement.

The recipient of many death threats, he will now only travel to Iraq with UN bodyguards. Friends say Mr Ekeus, who is married with children, is genuinely disturbed by the threats, even if they question the wisdom of assigning him guards. "If they are going to kill him, then they are going to kill him," one noted. "They hardly need to do it in Baghdad."

So endless has been the cat-and-mouse game with Iraq over its weapons, it is hard to imagine Unscam will ever conclude its business. If it does, it will either be because Iraq, possibly under fresh rulers, finally comes clean with the UN or because the resolve of the international community to keep punishing it is allowed to crumble.

Mr Ekeus, widely admired and liked in New York's diplomatic circles, may by then have moved on. Last month, Sweden beat Australia in an election to claim one of the Security Council seats for two years. Mr Ekeus' reward could be his appointment to the Swedish ambassadorship to the UN, and to the occupancy of that coveted seat.

DAVID USBORNE

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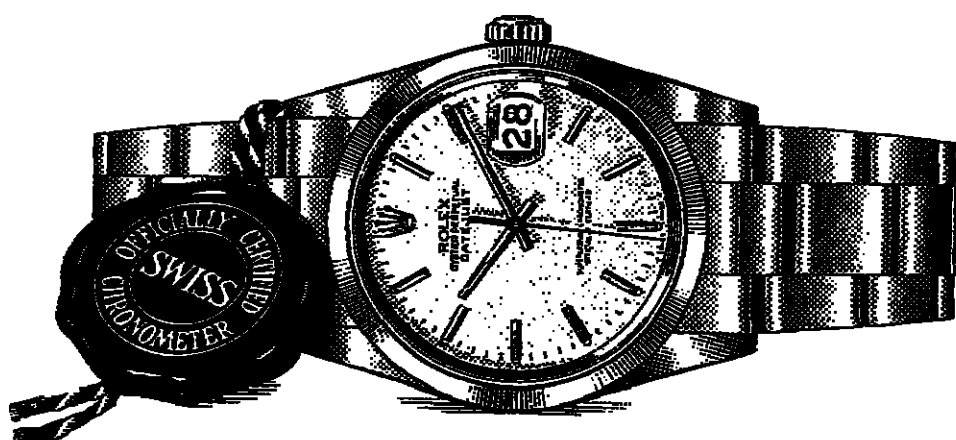
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Labour must set out its European vision

Tories ready to slam on Euro brakes. That was a headline we ran a month ago. It proved an accurate forecast. The drivers of the national vehicle have indeed been trying harder to prove the Tories the decelerationist party. Last week's hysteria over a limited European Court of Justice decision on working hours was part of the new plot. Now Labour, too, has swivelled its right foot. Gordon Brown, Shadow Chancellor and self-advised Euro-enthusiast, has switched tack and said Labour will hold a referendum to approve any Labour government decision on joining the single currency.

The move was made on the same day that Sir James Goldsmith spent yet more of his loot on full-page advertisements calling the Labour leader vocally challenged for not speaking up about "unelected bureaucrats". (The politically literate might usefully speculate on how an elected bureaucrat might behave let alone what a millionaire elected by French people to the European Parliament is up to here). So it seems that Labour, too, is hitting the brakes over Europe. Walworth Road is strewn with focus groups and opinion polls telling it the wind of public opinion is blowing strongly from the Eurosceptic quarter. Good ship new Labour goes with the gusts.

Students of political gamesmanship will be quick to spot the ways Labour's move is useful, tactically. Now there is no formal space between Labour's commitments and the Tories' on consulting the people.

That makes it likely (Bill Cash is already saying as much) that Tory Eurosceptics will push even harder for Tory policy to become yet more anti-European. Clear blue water is the relevant cliché in these discussions, the English Channel's murky greyness failing the colour test but serving the political purpose.

But just because it is a good short-run tactic does not make it any less welcome. Labour ought to have pleased all who wish the embrace of democratic decision-making to be widened. European money is a fit subject for national consultation. It belongs to that category of constitutional decisions for which national plebiscites are a way of engaging the public's attention and eliciting a firm decision. They are appropriate not just because they give people a stake in their political destiny but because Parliament has never been a terribly impressive instrument for deciding its own shape and prospects – that is certainly true in the 1990s as we contemplate the quality of House of Commons debate and conduct. European money would take something away from the plenitude of parliamentary powers: it is right that the people, not Parliament, decide.

Gordon Brown denied yesterday that there was anything Eurosceptical to be read into his announcement. What has changed, he said, is the date when Labour thinks it best to make the call on European Monetary Union. We need to know the details of the stability pact intended to bind participants to good fiscal behaviour. And

we have to contend with the fact that France and Germany are still some way away from meeting the criteria for joining. "Don't shoot till you see the whites of their eyes" is doubtless as good a maxim in economic diplomacy as frontier skirmishing yet there is something disingenuous in Mr Brown's argument. If the French, the Jacobins of deflationary terror, and the Germans, pillars of monetary rectitude, are struggling to converge now with barely months to go, one of two things must be true. Either their political systems are capable of delivering some pretty dramatic fiscal decisions at an extraordinarily quicker pace than they have so far, or the convergence criteria are impossible, in which case the entire enterprise on its current timetable needs to be reviewed.

Robin Cook has been saying something along these lines and perhaps Mr Brown has now moved a few steps towards him. Meanwhile, what the pro-Europeans (among whom we count ourselves) seem unable to do is convince the public that the pain and the slog and the sheer political messiness of this period of European Union history between Maastricht and EMU is a harbinger of good times around the corner. What the pollsters have been picking up is a widespread cooling of the belief that they have a recipe for our bet-

ter future and this sentiment is buttressed in a minority of the population by that infuriating mixture of little-Englandism, American Republicanism, and don't-like-foreigners personified by Lord Tebbit. A referendum on the currency issue would, the pollsters say, turn up a clear majority against. A referendum on continuing UK membership of the European Union – who knows how close that might run?

So what is Labour really offering in that pro-European commitment affirmed again yesterday? On the single currency it offers Fabianism – we want to see the plane on the tarmac, engine revving, before we load our baggage on board. The trouble is it's not exactly a leading stance. The Liberal Democrats are right to ask (albeit from the safety of impotence) why Labour cannot book its seat now, on the basis of the known design. The answer, once more, is fear of being caught with a position identifiably to the left of the electorate. But the fact is that any conceivable Labour position is going to be "left" in this sense.

Public opinion on Europe may be a hard place for Labour but it is not a rock. It is more like a flabby mass of prejudice and misgiving which has lately been stiffened by events in France and Germany – the gap between French and German governments and their people over the effects of rapid convergence cannot be wished away. The public's anxieties are not baseless. It is the duty of the party which calls itself pro-European to address them honestly. A vision of Britain's future in Europe needs

to recognise the deflationary momentum now at work, explain the processes and accentuate the benefits of closer union. The alternative is to reproduce as official Labour policy the *non-sequiturs* and silliness that pass for a case on newspaper pages purchased by Sir James Goldsmith.



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Norris keeps on trucking

There are two ways of looking at the phenomenon of Steven Norris, the ex-transport minister and ex-serial monogamist now about to receive the lorry-owners' shilling (well, £150,000 to be exact) as head of their trade association. One is that he adds to the nation's gaiety. Without Norris, we could have had none of those "there's no accounting for taste" conversations about his five mistresses. The other is a kind of despair at the extent of his irresponsibility. Can't he see how leaping into the arms of an interest group diminishes public confidence in the probity of ministers even further? Here, too, seems to be yet another example of the unwillingness of the House of Commons to police itself and subject its members, especially high and mighty ministers, to minimum rules of self-restraint when it comes to making a fast buck out of public office.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Child victims of failed foster care

Sir: The recent revelation that social services departments are losing track of children ("The disappeared of Middle England", 9 November) is only one of many to be found in the state care of children. A serious and dangerous decay in child-care social work has been taking place over recent years. Both funding shortfall and current policy are to blame. Insufficient training in children's work aggravates the situation.

It is popularly believed that children in care now have the "advantage" of foster care instead of residential care. A few do enjoy that advantage, but very many children are now moving from one unsuitable (because badly matched) foster home to another, time and time again. I meet children of 10 years old who have had 10 foster homes since the age of five. My record is a 14-year-old with more than 20 moves. Many such children can attach to no one. They run off and "get lost".

Social services have accepted the fiction that this kind of "care" is better than the careful planning and assessment which used to be available in reception centres.

I am also troubled to discover that many social workers openly admit to having little specialist knowledge of child care or child development.

It is time for a full inquiry into the treatment of children by social services departments, and the training of social workers in child care.

KENNETH REDGRAVE
Consultant in Child Care
Northwich, Cheshire

The two-tier NHS is here

Sir: I am unable to remain silent any longer about the hypocrisy of the Government's reassurances about the state of the National Health Service.

I am a consultant anaesthetist working in a university teaching hospital. Part of my work consists of outpatient consultation and treatment for patients with chronic pain. Budgetary constraints upon both purchaser and provider have led to a reduction in the number of patients my consultant colleague and I are able to treat. I have today been advised that henceforth I should prioritise new outpatient appointments according to whether the referring general practitioner is a fundholder, rather than solely on clinical criteria.

I do not seek to blame the Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust management for their advice. If the NHS is to be run on a competitive internal market basis such a policy is inevitable, and indeed we now have differential waiting lists for other medical specialties within the trust based on the same criteria.

I challenge Stephen Dorrell and Gerald Mague (none of whose constituents are referred to me) to deny that this represents a two-tier system of medical care, based not upon the patient's ability to pay, but rather upon the GP's ability to pay. Patients have a right to know this.

Dr DIANA BRIGHOUSE
Southampton



Tory subsidy for voucher scheme

Sir: Judith Judd reports that the nursery voucher scheme has created 800 new local education authority places and 285 private and voluntary sector ones ("Schools cram in nursery voucher scheme children", 14 November). Ministers state that the places have been created as a direct result of the Government's vouchers policy. This is not true.

The new LEA places come about largely because of the extra £1m capital money given to Norfolk County Council to build new places. No such capital sums will be available when the scheme is applied across the nation in April.

Moreover, the Government told me in a reply to a Parliamentary Question on 4 November that there has actually been a 76 per cent drop in the vouchers spent in the private and voluntary sectors between the summer and the autumn term.

Labour will get rid of the voucher scheme and replace it with an entitlement to a high-quality nursery place.

MARGARET HODGEMP
(Barking, Lab)
House of Commons
London SW17

MPs from lists no party hacks

Sir: Your leading article (11 November) on the possibilities of electoral reform writes off the additional member system (used by Germany) on the grounds that the "appointed" MPs, whose purpose is to bring about the overall

Keep charities out of commerce

Sir: In his piece on charity tax concessions (13 November) Adrian Randall made several excellent suggestions to the Chancellor for his Budget, but one extremely dangerous one. This was that charities should be allowed to make up to £25,000 a year from trade of a non-charitable kind without paying Corporation Tax.

On the face of it that looks fair enough, encouraging charities to be entrepreneurial, and leaving them with the fruits of their efforts for devotion to their charitable purposes.

However, such a change would cause open warfare between small traders and the charity sector. There is already resentment enough about the rating and tax concessions charity shops enjoy in the high streets of Britain if they are mainly selling donated goods. If the charity sector seeks to extend these privileges to any trading activity the pressure to reverse the existing concessions could build up very fast.

But there is a more profound reason to oppose Mr Randall's proposal. It would allow charities to speculate with charitable funds so as to make profits via trading wholly unrelated to their charitable purposes.

Not only would this expose the general assets of the charity to the major risks inherent in such trade, but it would be liable to distract charities from their primary

Poor maths results add up

Sir: So, the International Maths and Science Study shows English teenagers perform poorly in mathematics (report, 16 November). Before everyone jumps to the conclusion that it is teaching methods – and, by implication, teachers – that are to blame, might I suggest a long, hard look at the content of the national curriculum for mathematics?

Many years BC (Before the Curriculum), the majority of the maths syllabus was taken up by number and algebra, and statistical topics were hardly mentioned. The national curriculum made data-handling into first one quarter and now one third of the syllabus, with number and algebra squashed into one third between them.

New England comes bottom of nine industrialised countries in number and algebra. The only thing that puzzles me is why anyone should be at all surprised.

MARY JONES
Exeter

Tags do help to prevent crime

Sir: There would have been no need for Stephen Shaw and Paul Cavatino to speculate (letters, 12 November) on the likely effect of monitoring a home curfew order on young offenders with the electronic tag, had they looked to the evidence.

The crime-reducing effect on offenders aged 10-14, for instance, is impressive. A study from Allen County, Indiana, shows a success rate of better than nine in 10 in the sensible use of the electronic monitor on home curfews covering a 60- to 120-day span.

Your correspondents ask for the "strengthening of bail support and intensive supervision" and for a "back-up to social work intervention". This is precisely what the tag will do, if intelligently applied by courts with the co-operation of probation workers.

Behavioural changes induced by the tag have already saved many a young offender from a life of crime and imprisonment as an adult.

TOM STACEY
Director, Offender's Tag Association
London W8

Poor outlook for 'Cassandra'

Sir: Tony Blair must be quaking in his boots with "Cassandra", a supposedly senior MP after him (report, 16 November). So senior in fact that he will not do what his name to politicians love to do, put his name to an article.

Fortunately for Mr Blair the reality is that no post-war Labour leader has ever been pushed out of office. Even Michael Foot stated that off Blair is unlikely to think that he, probably the first Labour leader for two decades to win an election, is going to be pushed out.

As someone who cast their vote in the all-members ballot for leader, I am somewhat perturbed that MPs who do not accept Blair as leader cannot even say so publicly. They are so far out on a limb they dare not even admit who they are for fear of what the other 99 per cent of the party who support Blair will do to them. I would rather hear no more of them.

IAN CORFIELD
London SW12

Forget the War

Sir: James Seymour (letter, 15 November) is right that the two-minute silence must be put behind us. Having spent a number of years overseas recently, I can see Britain with fresh eyes. This country is obsessed with the past, particularly the regular reparation of the Second World War. Let go. This attitude does us no favours. Indeed, even your front page article on a quiz show ("I started so now I'll finish", 15 November) refers to the war. For heaven's sake, is there no end to it?

DAVE BAKER
Hayle, Cornwall

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Man and beast



Fancy a broken leg, a bit of cannibalism, heavy drugs and constant agony? Oh, and death from a burst liver? That's life for the average British farm animal. By Danny Penman

Did you spare a thought for the animal you munched on for breakfast? Did you know how it was produced? If you didn't, you are not alone. The meat industry is dedicated to hiding the truth of flesh production from your eyes. And to a large degree, it has succeeded.

The industry doesn't want you to know that poultry are habitually doped with a range of antibiotics and drugs to boost production; that up to a quarter of British cattle are fed illegal and highly dangerous drug cocktails for the same reason; and that four million lambs a year die from exposure and disease within hours of birth.

The industry does not want the consumer to realise that modern broiler chickens are forced to grow so fast that their legs break under the strain and that tens of millions of the remainder are crippled and in constant pain. And it is especially keen to conceal the 20 per cent of pigs that have their throats slit while still at least partly conscious.

In the future the meat industry will have even more to hide. Genetic engineers are working on featherless chickens, ultra-fast-growing pigs containing human genes, and flocks of sheep that shed their fleeces in harmony—all with the aid of an

engineered hormone. Then there are the animals that will be designed from the ground up to be "stupid" so they won't realise they are being abused, plus the new breeds of pigs and chickens engineered to graze. Animals will be re-designed to produce pharmaceuticals and "nutraceuticals" — re-engineered milk products containing nutrients and drugs to "enhance" the mind and body.

Exploiting and moulding animals for human ends is nothing new. We've been doing it for millennia, but what is new is the scale of animal exploitation on factory farms and the sheer power of the economic forces unleashed on farm animals in recent decades. These forces, if left unchecked, will continue to lower the welfare of farm animals across Europe and also leave humans prey to a host of new diseases — of which BSE and its human equivalent will only be the start.

For the average farmer, animals are living machines that convert grass, grains, drugs and water into meat, eggs and milk. There is no romance. The purpose of animals on the farm is to produce food. This attitude to farming only became entrenched after the Second World War when farmers were asked to produce ever-greater quantities of food for an increasingly affluent society.

Paradoxically, the first beneficiaries of this farming revolution were the animals: the farmer could afford to treat them better because it made economic sense to do so. They were fed nutritious foods and given adequate shelter for the first time. They were pampered because they would grow faster and produce more.

But that was only a brief honeymoon period because the more a farmer invests, the harder the animals have to be worked to produce an economic return. The economic logic is straightforward: for the farmer to make a profit the meat, milk or eggs must be worth more than the expense of producing them. This expense is broken down into two parts: fixed and variable costs.

Clearly, the more animals that can be reared under the umbrella of fixed costs, the greater the profit. For example, if a farmer has one building for housing pigs which has a fixed cost of £900 per year to run, regardless of the number of animals that are actually reared in it, the variable costs are £10 per pig, and each animal can be sold for £100, then the farmer has to produce 10 animals to break even. If he produces 20 pigs he will make £900 profit. If 40 animals are produced then the profit will be £2,700. Such is the incentive to farm animals as intensively as possible.

This brutal logic is at its most extreme in the poultry industry. In the 1950s, egg-laying hens were reared in cages about the size of a broadsheet newspaper. But after a few years farmers began to pack two birds into each cage, then three and now up to six hens are crammed into each one. A typical laying hen now has the floor space smaller than a sheet of A4 paper.

Many birds succumb to a form of hysteria and the frustrated birds peck each other's feathers out. Some even resort to cannibalism. The industry has solved the problem, with its usual degree of elegance, by slicing off the hens' beaks with red-hot blades.

Another way of increasing profits is to maximise throughput. Thirty years ago a typical broiler hen, raised for meat, reached slaughter weight in about 80 days. Now it takes just 42. Such phenomenal growth rates ensure that the bodies of the broilers grow faster than their legs, hearts and lungs.

As a result, about 180 million birds per year are wracked with pain in their deformed legs and joints. Many millions more are so deformed that they cannot even walk without the help of their wings. And, according to the Agricultural and Food Research Council, another seven million hens per year just keel over and die through heart and lung failure.

Another way of maximising profit is to convert a waste product into a raw material. The rendering industry takes all the meat-derived waste from farms and slaughterhouses plus sick and dying animals and converts it all into raw protein and fat. This rendered down waste was, until March this year, incorporated into animal feed.

The remorseless industrial logic of rendering gave the world BSE and, perhaps, a public health disaster. The disease appears to have arisen when the brains and nervous systems of sheep were rendered down and fed to cows. An infectious agent, known as a prion, is believed to have survived the process and begun infecting cows.

Rendering concentrated the prions and served them up to

their new hosts. They built up and were concentrated again when those infected cows were themselves rendered down. At each turn of the cycle the prions were concentrated and served to their new hosts. They were also being served up to another new host: the British people.

It is now almost certain that BSE has spread to humans and takes the guise of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. If it has jumped to humanity how many will die? Nobody knows for certain but Steven Dealler, a consultant microbiologist and BSE expert, says it may kill anywhere between 1,000 and 10 million.

The agricultural system is in need of a radical overhaul. It is endangering human health, despoiling the countryside and inflicting unnecessary suffering on more than 700 million creatures per year in Britain alone.

So what is the alternative? The most effective long-term solution is to alter the existing agricultural economic system so that it is forced to take animal welfare seriously. This can be done by shifting the focus away from unfettered free trade within the European Union.

Free trade has generally boosted the material prosperity of humanity but it has its costs too. And when it comes to agricultural free trade it is the animals that are picking up the tab. Most nations recognise that the free market should not take precedent over certain moral issues. Laws against slavery and prostitution distort the free market but are accepted as a necessary part of a civilised society. More recently, Europe has recognised that free trade should not take precedence over the environment. A mixture of

self-interest and heart-felt ethics has been allowed to distort the market and most accept it as a mark of civilisation.

When it comes to animal welfare, the situation is radically different. Animals are classed as "agricultural products". This definition of thinking, feeling creatures is written into the heart of Europe — the Treaty of Rome. Animals are actually classed alongside vegetables, cereals, meat and the "guts, bladders and stomachs of animals." In law they have the same ethical value as ball-point pens and dishwashers.

While the foundation stone of the European Union regards animals as ethically worthless they will remain the prey of unfettered free trade. Is it any wonder that animals are transported for 1,000 miles without being fed, watered or rested? Or that week-old veal calves are locked in crates so small they cannot even turn around? Or that new animals will be created for whatever trivial use is deemed necessary by the genetic engineers? But there is now a window of opportunity to achieve concrete change.

Europe is in the midst of a round of negotiations to decide the future of the Union. If the Treaty of Rome could be amended to take into account animal welfare then, over the coming decades, the lives and deaths of animals could be transformed. In 1994, in response to a million-signature petition organised by Compassion In World Farming, the European Parliament called on the Union to amend the Treaty of Rome "to enable animals to be treated as sentient beings." Charles Dairman, more than a century ago, recognised that animals are sentient, that is, conscious and capable of dis-

playing emotions, and yet, the meat industry and the politicians of Europe appear incapable of recognising the idea. The reason? It would cost the meat industry money.

But the grannies of Shoreham, Brightonsea and Coventry have rioted and the politicians have taken note of their votes. Suddenly the animal welfare lobby is powerful. Labour is promising to push for an amendment to the Treaty of Rome to recognise animals as sentient beings. The governments of Austria and Germany want to go three-quarters of the way there and recognise that animal welfare should be a major consideration in European legislation.

So where is our government? In the present Inter-Governmental Conference negotiations, the Conservatives are using weasel words that call for animal welfare to be taken into account in "community policy". Where the Austrian proposal is specific and calls for it to be taken into account in "common legislation", the British position calls for a cosy chat around the fireside. But then Douglas Hogg, the Minister of Agriculture, has frequently ridiculed the animal welfare movement.

There is also a deeper reason behind the Conservatives' actions. One Ministry of Agriculture official privately admitted that "if you go down the road of recognising full sentience then you don't have to go very far before you realise that maybe you shouldn't be eating animals at all." And that, of course, would never do.

Dr Danny Penman's book *"The Price of Meat: Salmonella, Listeria, Mad Cows — What Next?"* is published by Victor Gollancz on Thursday

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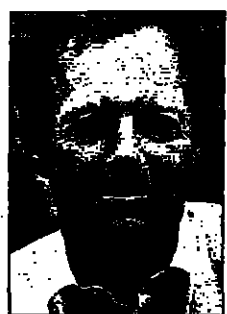
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With a big name there, silence is golden



Miles Kington

There was a bit of a fuss on Radio 4's *Feedback* programme last week, about the two-minute Remembrance silence.

The reason for the fuss was that this silence was observed on BBC TV but not on BBC radio.

And listeners were furious, which is what listeners to *Feedback* are best at. The BBC head of corporate affairs who went on *Feedback* to defend the situation spoke so opaquely with so many Birtpeak words that nobody could understand what he was getting at, which is what heads of corporate affairs are best at.

Only I knew the whole truth of the affair. I can now reveal that the

non-appearance of the two-minute silence on radio was entirely due to me.

It came about like this. I have a small, a very small independent radio company, which makes small, very small radio programmes.

Most of them are a minute long or less.

There'll be another chance to hear that programme on Thursday evening at 8.15pm.

Remember that announcement?

That was one of mine. And have you noticed that when Alastair Cooke's *Letter from America* goes out in the morning, he starts by saying "Good morning" but if it is the evening, he says, "Good evening"? That's another of mine.

I travelled all the way to New York to record Cooke saying "Good morning" and "Good evening". Very professional performer, that man. Got it right first time. Now, they can slip the right greeting in at a moment's notice.

As you see, my programmes are very short indeed. So when I came up with an idea for recording the two-minute silence, it was the longest programme idea I had ever put forward to the BBC.

"The BBC can't have just any old silence," was my plea.

"You've got to have a rather solemn, pregnant silence with a slight cathedral-like echo, and a tiny far-off noise that might just be the Queen clearing her throat. A very special sort of silence..."

In the old days I would have gone straight to a producer with the idea, and chatted it over, but things are different in the BBC these days. I had to submit the whole thing in writing, with a breakdown of the budget, schedule of operations etc. Then, finally, I was called in by a man called Charles.

"I like the idea," said Charles. "However, we think it is a bit down-market for Radio 4."

How can a silence be up-or down-market? It turned out, after a bit of chatting, that Charles was under pressure from someone upstairs to make sure that this was a prestigious silence.

"I could record it on location at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Paris, if you like," I said. "Bit noisy."

"A war graveyard in Normandy?"

"Excellent! A sort of serious wind-swept silence. I like it. And is there any chance of getting a big name attached?"

"Pardon?"

It turned out that Charles

found it easier to get programmes accepted if there was a big name attached. I said I might be able to get someone like Robert Robinson or Sue Lawley to come to the Normandy war grave and be silent while we recorded.

"Excellent! Or if you could get Joanna Lumley, so much the better. I think her name would sell any silence."

I went away and rechecked it, and came back with a revised budget. It was getting expensive now, because the silence was being recorded on location in France with a star performer. (I had not been able to get any of the stars mentioned, but Rik Mayall had expressed great interest.) I went back to the BBC.

"All commissioning is being done jointly for radio and TV these days at the BBC," he said. "So how would you visualise this two-minute silence picture-wise?"

"There wouldn't be any pictures," I said. "It's radio."

"Hmmm," said Jeremy. "Well, I'm a TV man myself, and the only reason we ever have silence on TV is to let us watch something happening. What would be happening during this two-minute silence on radio?"

"Well, people would be

having their own thoughts, really..."

"Having their own thoughts?" said Jeremy. "Mr Kington, we at the new BBC don't want viewers and listeners to have to provide their own thoughts! That's not giving the licence fee-payer value for money!"

"But the whole point of the two-minute silence..." I said.

"It would all be worth-while," said Jeremy, "if you came up with another reason for your visit to Normandy. Perhaps you could take out four panelists and have a World War II quiz on location! Yes, something like that..."

It all went from bad to worse after that. Rik Mayall was dropped because they didn't want an alternative-style silence. Then the quiz programme went over budget, and we couldn't agree with the BBC on a repeat fee for the silence.

When Remembrance Day came, we were still locked in argument and the silence never went out. It's as simple as that.

Luckily, I still have 100 cassettes left of this very special silence, now featuring Jennifer Paterson and Charles Dixon-Wright saying absolutely nothing. If you want your very own copy, just send me a blank cheque...

1550 من الاصل

the commentators

Suffering does not fit us for law-making

Today Parliament will vote on what handguns to ban. Terry Dickson MP will tell us whether the Snowdrop campaigners – the parents of Dunblane – are anything like satisfied. Only the very hard-hearted will wonder at the wisdom of this alliance between the maverick reactionary and an association of the scared. This is the New Politics, in which the popular voice is heard and acted upon.

It certainly has very attractive elements about it. In the past couple of years, we have seen the development of new pressure groups whose common denominator is suffering. They have antecedents in the development of groups representing people who were the victims of accidents such as Hillsborough, the *Marchioness* and the *Herald of Free Enterprise*. Now we have groups representing the victims of the street: of drug-pushers and stalkers, of knives and guns.

We are bound to listen to these sufferers. But there are obvious absurdities. Ann Pearson of Snowdrop, lobbying for handgun control, was quoted yesterday as she opined on reports of legal action against the police authority by policemen who say they have been traumatised by the massacre. This, surely, is no more her business than anyone else's.

More generally, what on earth would HG Wells have made of the entire tendency? "The British masses neither rule nor want to rule. They are politically apathetic. They do not produce outstanding individuals to express their distinctive thoughts and feelings..." he wrote. "Slave revolts, peasant revolts, revolts of the proletariat have always been fits of rage, acute social fevers which have passed." Today we have moral panic.

It's true, surely, that most of us regard good government as government that requires no work from us. Equally, however, a hundred years or so of free education really ought to have produced a society in which nearly everyone is articulate. Cassette recorders and home videos were bound to tool people up to transmit as well as receive.

It does not matter that the people, campaigning necessarily lack experience. The Labour MP Tony Wright – author of *Citizens and Subjects: An Essay on British Politics* – robustly defends the erosion of the power of "those of us who are paid to take an interest in everything all the time". It is hardly surprising, he says, that citizens take an interest in an issue only when it crumbles against their own lives: "I'm only interested in the workings of my car when it breaks down."

And it is good that the old class trench warfare of the political parties is being replaced by the sniper action and guerrilla movements of the new apolitical campaigns, which form and dissolve by the hour.

But the new groups only have a claim on our attention. They have no monopoly on the truth or even public-spiritedness. To the extent that speaking out is a form of therapy, the rest of us are free to wonder how much to listen to lines of argument which are put, not on their own merits necessarily, but as part of a process which may do the sufferer much good but the rest of us small or great harm. The campaigners



Richard D North

What gives a Dunblane mother the right to a view on a policeman's trauma?

and their arguments may not be wise or even particularly nice. Paul Betts, the father of Leah, who died after taking Ecstasy a year ago last Saturday, defends not merely his right to be heard, but also the quality of what he says. "I can talk from the heart about what it is like losing a daughter, but when I talk about drugs, it's the *BMJ* [British Medical Journal] and specialists in hospitals that I quote." He has, in short, been on a crash course in drug-related problems. He insists, too, that his is no populist, reactionary campaign: "Our point of view is simply awareness, we've never told anybody 'don't do it'."

Yet we need quietly to assert that politicians, at least politicians taken together, are wiser and nicer than the rest of us – sufferers included. It is Parliament that makes us empty our pockets to the poor. And whilst we are mostly squeamish, we are also mostly in favour of hanging as the way to produce less suffering and fewer victims, and it is parliamentarians who detect a wrongness in this solution.

Of course, in a sense Parliament was always wrong, or at any rate laggardly and reactionary. It has always defended yesterday's ordering of society and yesterday's morality. When we hear the conflict between the indignation of the new righteous and the obduracy of parliamentarians, we know who to support.

Yet we should be a little cautious. Parliament has usually been the battleground between the silent majority and the powerful minority. Now, things are more complicated, and more fluid. Martin Durham, an academic at Wolverhampton University who discusses the influence of "morality" campaigns on politics, points out that when we listen to victims we will not necessarily hear a coherent voice. He says: "The subway killing in New York produced a victim who turned Democrat because she wanted gun control, but also a Republican who argued for the right to carry concealed personal weapons for self-defence."

So someone wanting to fend off a new tyranny of the suffering would not merely have few political allies, but would not know where to seek them. Yet, oddly, at least sometimes, the sufferers are arguing against a strong majority interest. Most of us would like to be able to drink a bit more before we drive, and the evidence says that if we are middle-aged we would be unlikely to hurt anyone as we do so. Most young people would like legally to be able to smoke dope and perhaps (more ambiguously) take Ecstasy, and mostly feel that to be smaller risks than would otherwise be attractive. Few of us use handguns or combat knives, but many of us wonder whether the existence of the hardware in itself represents the source of the harm.

As Tony Wright says, even as he cheers on the New Politics: "I am against fundamentalism of any kind, whether it is about animals, drugs or guns." He adds: "Generating an engagement is wholly positive. But that doesn't mean the campaigners' policy conclusions are always right". Indeed, Parliament may need to develop listening skills but it also needs to retain its independence of judgement if we are not to fall prey to a series of single-issue moral panics.

Too late – yet again

by Paul Valley

So are Western troops still needed in Zaire? The mass return of Hutu refugees to Rwanda continued for the third day in a human wave which showed no sign of relenting yesterday. By the time the first foreign troops are ready to leave home later this week, more than half the 1.1 million Rwandan refugees in eastern Zaire are likely to have returned home of their own accord.

The impromptu migration prompted US Defense Secretary William Perry to say the United Nations might now modify its plan to send a multinational humanitarian force to the region. No doubt he worries about the embarrassment of the United States contingent having nothing to do in the northern Congo sector where it reluctantly accepted what one commentator on the spot called "minimalist and almost risk-free duties". Meanwhile the UN special envoy to Rwanda, the Canadian Raymond Chretien, insisted troops were still needed in the troubled region, despite the protestations of the Rwandan president that what is needed now is aid not an army.

It would not be fair to minimise the seriousness of the disagreement. In the more dangerous southern Bukavu and Uvira sectors as many as 500,000 refugees are still at large – missing or perhaps still hostages of the Hutu militia-men responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. And the key outside force for that area – France – is evidently not wanted there by either the Rwandans or the rebels in control on the ground.

Such twists and turns, hesitations and disagreements have been typical of the response of the West to the crisis which prompted the UN only on Friday to authorise a 10,000-strong force for the region. Britain backed the idea, though only a week before its officials had privately said that the idea was "madness".

A complex web of influences lay behind the British U-turn. First was the growing fear that the nation's TV screens might be filled until Christmas with images of a million dying Africans (in all the big catastrophes of recent times – Ethiopia in 1984, Somalia in 1992 and Rwanda in 1994 – the politicians acted only when the television pictures roused public opinion to demand action). Then there was the prospect of the death of the ailing President Mobutu of Zaire, who has sucked from the country's ruined economy an immense private fortune which is failing to halt the gradual deterioration of his health in a Swiss clinic. The fear was that his imminent death could complete Zaire's descent into chaos and drag neighbouring states like Uganda, Angola, Zambia and Tanzania in too. Finally there was Mr Major's realisation that it might be a good idea



Does Zaire still need a UN task force – or should a different question have been asked much earlier?

to back France's interventionist stance at a time when his government needs any gratitude it can garner from a head of government in Europe.

Perhaps it worked. Fear of the arrival of a UN task force may have been what underlay the decision of the Hutu gunmen to flee, freeing their hostages people to return to Rwanda.

Perhaps not. Reports from the ground suggest rather that Zairean Tutsis, having been told that UN troops would not disarm the Hutu militias or separate them from ordinary folk, realised that once the UN arrived the Hutus would be able to stay in Zaire. So on Thursday morning they bombed the main refugee camp at Munguwa, which is what really caused the gunmen to flee.

Either way the danger now is that everyone will feel that a resolution, of sorts, has been achieved and that all the international community need

do is work out the best way of tidying up the aftermath. History suggests otherwise. The UN relief operation in Somalia cost around \$2bn to channel less than \$100m of effective emergency relief, according to Mohammed Sahnoun, the man who masterminded the UN relief operation there. The lives of at least 6,000 Somalis and 83 UN peacekeepers were also lost in its Operation Restore Hope.

It was not an isolated example. UN forces were humiliated by the Bosnian Serbs in another example of an ill-prepared and badly managed intervention. Most classically was the previous ignominious deployment of UN troops with no clear mandate in Rwanda in 1994 who were suddenly withdrawn at a crucial juncture, with hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians being massacred around them in an obvious genocide.

Hindsight is always 20:20. It is easy now to say that the international community

should have disarmed the Hutu militia when they reached Zaire. It is easy to condemn the racism of the Zairean government, which denied citizenship to the Tutsis who have lived in the east of Zaire for more than 200 years.

But what mechanisms might have been put in place to foresee the violent implications of such decisions?

The odd thing is that such situations should take us by surprise in the first place. Conflicts like this one – which are a by-product of a failed process of creating new nation-states – are all too common. The same thing happened, or is happening still, in Uganda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and a number of places in Central Asia.

In all these countries power is monopolised by a specific ethnic group. And the absence of a national unifying factor – such as a strong social class with managerial skills or an enlightened and highly committed

leadership – offers no counter-vailing factor. Ethnic differences are often compounded by bad management. Only 50 years after independence this is hardly surprising; it took centuries of civil wars for Europe to reach the nation-state phase.

Such conflicts occur mostly where people are poor – in Africa and Latin America, and Asia. In the next 50 years the world population will reach nine billion – without a commensurate increase in per capita economic output. Deformation and desertification will compel entire populations to move from the areas they inhabit today. Yet the chief response of the Western powers has been to cut aid by almost 10 per cent over the last five years and to ignore potential crises in the Third World until they explode onto our TV screens.

Once the United Nations was seen as a possible policeman of such crises. Increasingly the notion of an authoritarian world-government body is seen as unrealistic. But just because solutions cannot be dispensed from one central point in the UN does not mean that nothing can be done.

Drawing lessons from his experience in Somalia, Dr Sahnoun, who has also been a behind-the-scenes UN mediator in a number of major international conflicts over the past two decades, suggested in a lecture to the Catholic Institute for International Relations last year a few pointers on how this could be done.

There was sick as well as carrot. He spoke of new bodies to promote co-operation between the UN and sovereign governments, the creation of a standing intervention force, better regional early-warning systems, a series on mini-Marshall Plans agreed between the Western powers and Third World blocs, a greater heed to the interests of the business community and a strengthening of civil society organisations. The role of merchants and women in particular were crucial, he said, in creating links across tribal boundaries that put pressures on the parties to ethnic conflicts.

The details of his prescription may be open to debate. But the sense that some pre-emptive apparatus is required is less open to question. Pre-emptive measures do work. Why else would 550 American soldiers have been stationed in Macedonia since 1992 to prevent the Balkans war spilling over into a conflagration between Greece and Turkey? The difference, of course, is that there are no major strategic Western interests in most of the beleaguered regions where ethnic conflict is at its most fierce.

Only when a mega-disaster looms does attention focus there – and the debates begin on emergency responses which might never have been necessary if the world was minded to think seriously in the first place.

Is the British Museum losing its marbles?

Myopia at the Treasury is putting a great institution at risk, writes Andreas Whittam Smith

"The economics of the madhouse" – that is the phrase which keeps coming to mind as I contemplate the present plight of the British Museum. On the one hand, it has secured £30m of Lottery monies, and expects more, for the Great Court scheme to open up the large central courtyard of the museum, unseen for 150 years, and so allow many improvements to be made. On the other hand, it is going bust quickly in terms of current expenditure and receipts and to avert disaster it must contemplate massive staff cuts and charging for admission.

Go to the British Museum on any day at any time of the year and you will find its rooms crowded with people. British and foreign, young and old. It attracts six million visitors a year, more than any other British institution. And yet all this is put at risk by the mad economics of HM Treasury.

The Treasury, through its out-station, the Department of National Heritage, has decided to reduce the state's annual contribution to running costs by 15 per cent in real terms during the next few years. It neither sees the museum as an important element in the educational facilities of the country, which it is, nor as a prime asset of the big industry that is British tourism. The Treasury in its myopia sees the museum as an inefficient, old, dependent institution where cuts can only do good.

There is worse insanity. When the Government decided some years ago to shift the British Library out of the British Museum building into new premises next to St Pancras station in London, a move which is now taking place, it

failed to make any provision for the museum's loss of the considerable sums which the library has paid annually in rent and service charges. This takes the cut in the museum's grant in real terms up to 24 per cent. This would be as damaging as the incendiary bombs which wrecked a large number of rooms in 1941.

In a review of the museum's operations, which the trustees commissioned from a retired deputy secretary of the Treasury, Andrew Edwards, the author writes: "There is no disagreement that the extra burdens for the museum are a direct consequence of the decision to move the British Library. The Department has not so far, however, felt able to increase the level of forward grant to compensate."

Then, in an extraordinary passage, the former civil servant unwittingly reveals why the Treasury is by instinct unsympathetic to the museum's financial plight. He criticises the museum for being "cautious in its relationships with other constituencies including government". Its general preference is to "minimise dealings with external constituencies... it has a tradition of self-sufficiency... It prefers... to stand firmly by its own beliefs and traditions". In other words, it does not easily bend the supple knee. The museum is 257 years old and sure of itself.



The Elgin Marbles: under threat from the economics of the madhouse

Mr Edwards makes three main recommendations: be more trendy (yes, Treasury officials have some notion of trendiness); charge admission and reduce staff numbers by up to one-third.

Certainly the museum is untrendy. People freely enter the museum, study the floor

plan, visit such rooms as they choose, find in each a clear account of what is in front of them and read the excellent labels which accompany each object. That is it; nothing more is attempted.

Mr Edwards writes with evident disapproval of this approach. He says the magni-

ficent collections are "deemed" to speak for themselves. The museum has not seen itself as needing to attract audiences in a competitive market and has not thought it necessary to take special steps to "stimulate public excitement or enthusiasm". Presentation is designed to be consistent, cautious and

tasteful rather than "eye-catching". The image of excellence is all-important. "Vulgarity is to be avoided at all costs". The approval of scholars is the "dominating objective and its achievement is the highest accolade the museum can achieve". Less importance, clucks Mr Edwards, is attached

to winning accolades from the less scholarly.

The museum must not go down the path indicated by Mr Edwards. He believes that the museum should sell itself much harder but wants it simultaneously to make the whole task 10 times more difficult by charging £5 or £6 for entrance. Is this not a further example of the economics of the madhouse? You first cut the number of visitors by half (judging from the experience of charging by similar cultural institutions) and then try to win them back by a series of trendy initiatives.

It is not that some reform is not needed. The trustees have also engaged in their own version of crazy economics. It is astonishing to find from Mr Edwards' report that the museum does not employ any qualified accountants. It receives approaching £50m a year by way of government grant, sponsorship monies and its own earnings, yet does not have a financial director. It has no idea how it spends its money other than in the round. It would not know what the internal costs of the current China exhibition are, only what the external charges are.

It balances its budget by arbitrary cuts at the last moment in areas where no staff redundancies would arise – and thus recently reduced the sums set aside for acquisitions. Staff numbers have grown when the museum is in funds

and scarcely fallen when its position is tight. It has almost certainly wasted money on a significant scale.

This is the fault of the trustees, not successive directors. Securing careful expenditure of public funds is one of the things they are there for. They are supposed to be sensible folk, living in the real world, businessmen among them, knowledgeable about practical things. How have they been able to make sense of a jumble of figures each month which mixes up current and capital items? As soon as the trustees apply modern methods of financial management they will see what their staffing should be and they will be able to save substantial sums, albeit not sufficient to balance the books if the Treasury cuts its grant by 24 per cent in real terms.

Rather than the "mission statement" proposed by Mr Edwards (another trendy thing) the trustees should reconsider the statement issued by their 18th-century predecessors, entitled "Fundamental principles from which the Trustees do not think they can in Honor or conscience depart". If it is true to those, to its history and to the wishes of its benefactors the museum must encourage and support scholarship.

Of course the trustees have a duty to manage the museum efficiently, but they also have the right to look primarily to the Government for support. Then it will remain true to the vision of those founding fathers that its fundamental purpose should be collection of a national treasure "for the use and benefit of the public, who may have free access to view and peruse the same". Some principles are best unrenowned.

obituaries / gazette

Alger Hiss

Now that Alger Hiss has died historians must be hoping that among his papers he has left a memorandum explaining his role in the most important trial in modern American political history. For the case of *USA v Alger Hiss* was decisive in shaping McCarthyism, which came to dominate American political life between about 1949 and the end of the 1950s.

It all began on 3 August 1948 when Whitaker Chambers, a senior editor on *Time* magazine, told an open hearing of the notorious House Committee on Un-American Activities that in the 1930s he had been part of a Communist network in Washington DC. The network had included a State Department official named Alger Hiss, and though Chambers named a handful of others Hiss alone cabled the committee and demanded the opportunity to deny Chambers's charges.

By then Hiss was president of the Carnegie Peace Endowment and, aged 44, at the height of a brilliant career. For a moment it began to look like a terrible case of mistaken identity. But when Hiss was finally confronted with Chambers, he somewhat reluctantly identified him as a down-and-out journalist he had briefly known and helped named George Crosley.

Chambers, a man of many aliases, denied ever having used that one. Instead, he alleged that while they worked together for the CP underground Hiss had turned over his old apartment to him, given him a car, loaned him \$400 and accepted an expensive carpet as a present from the Party. He also gave some impressive details about Hiss's personal life.

As doubts grew about Hiss's story that he had known Chambers only slightly, subtle hints from former apartment to him for a month, thrown in a beat-up old Ford as part of the deal, accepted a cheap rug as part-payment and withdrawn \$400 from his account to buy furnishings. Hiss began to act like a defendant, guarding himself against possible charges of perjury. He used the words, "To my best recollection" 198 times at one committee hearing.

His most hostile questioner, a young Congressman named Richard Nixon, was scathing about this. "You can certainly testify 'Yes' or 'No' as to whether you gave Crosley a car," he asserted. "How many cars have you given away in your life, Mr Hiss?"

Hiss challenged Chambers to

repeat his story when not protected by Congressional privilege, and when he did so sued him for \$75,000. Only then did Chambers, who had repeatedly denied spying or having any documentary evidence to back his story, suddenly produce copies of State Department documents and, with much melodrama, five rolls of microfilm which he had hidden in a pumpkin on his Maryland farm.

These so-called "Pumpkin Papers" proved the undoing of Alger Hiss. Some were in his own handwriting, while others had been typed on a Woodstock typewriter he had owned in the 1930s. Chambers, who admitted to being a Communist, a spy and a perjurer, was given immunity while Hiss was indicted for perjury in having denied Chambers's charges. Though the indictment may have been perjury, the real issue was treason in having passed state secrets to the Soviet Union and, after two trials (the first jury split 8-4 for conviction), Hiss was found guilty and sentenced to five years in jail, on 25 January 1950.

Within weeks an obscure Senator named Joseph R. McCarthy had made his celebrated Wheeling speech claiming he had a list of 205 Communists "known to the Secretary of State" still working in the State Department. McCarthyism had been born and the Hiss case had acted as midwife. For the McCarthyite brand of anti-Communism, with its charge of "20 years of treason", was above all based upon the doctrine of "guilt by association" and was important politically as a Republican party indictment of the Democratic party's New Deal reformism of the 1930s. And who better personified the New Deal than the superior, snobbish, "Ivy League" civil servant Alger Hiss?

His career had been impressive. After Johns Hopkins and Harvard Law School Hiss had been picked to serve as clerk to the formidable Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes and thence joined government service during the New Deal. He had settled at the State Department and, during the Second World War, attended Yalta and been secretary to the San Francisco Conference which established the United Nations. He combined brains and administrative ability with good looks, manners, taste and a precise concern, verging at times on the obsessional, to tell the exact truth.

The contrast with Chambers was what gave the case drama.

Chambers was like the anti-hero of a 19th-century Russian novel. Born in 1901 of poor, artistic parents, he had a desperately unhappy childhood, but he possessed an unusual creative intelligence and admission to Columbia University might have been his passport to success. Chucked out for blasphemy and lying, he spent 15 years wandering America and Europe, a penniless failure, and joined the CP where he claimed he met Hiss.

Breaking with Communism after the Nazi-Soviet Pact in 1939 he made repeated attempts to warn the government about Hiss, to no avail. He joined *Time*, became a Christian, and started to make something of his life. With the Cold War, the mood in America changed and suddenly people were willing to believe his story about Hiss.

The hysterical paranoia about Communism in America in the years between 1946 and 1950 made it difficult for Hiss to receive a fair trial, and his supporters have long presented him as an American Dreyfus. For years it seemed possible he had been the victim of a gigantic plot, involving Chambers and the FBI, to frame him by making a fake copy of Woodstock N330099 on which the stolen papers had been typed. Revelations during Watergate about security service activities made this more plausible, and Hiss sustained a lifelong campaign for vindication.

After 40 years of disappointment he claimed he had achieved this in October 1992 when General Dmitri Volkogonov, having combed Soviet intelligence files, announced, "Not a single document substantiates the allegation that Mr A. Hiss collaborated with the Soviet Union." Hiss commented, "I can't imagine a more authoritative source than the files of the old Soviet Union."

However, Oleg Gordievsky, a recent defector, named Hiss as a former Soviet agent, and lack of substantiation of this in current Soviet files did not dispose of the question. Moreover, evidence more recently uncovered in Hungarian security files seems to show that Hiss was indeed part of an American Communist spy ring.

Moreover, the real evidence against Hiss was found by the historian Allen Weinstein in the files of Hiss's own defence lawyers. This drove Weinstein to conclude in his book *Perjury*, published in 1978, that Hiss had committed perjury and was "guilty as charged".



Hiss in 1948, the year he was first accused of spying for the Russians. His conviction of perjury 17 months later and sentence to five years' imprisonment launched the McCarthyite witch-hunt in the US

He shows that while Hiss was telling the FBI, the grand jury and two trial juries that he had completely forgotten the make of his 1930s typewriter, or how he had disposed of it, he actually remembered quite clearly to whom he had given the old Woodstock and produced it himself only to stop the FBI locating it.

His lawyers' own papers further contain compelling evidence that handwritten notations on the typed State Department documents were written by Hiss or his wife Priscilla, that the style in which they were typed was hers, and that Chambers's story that transfer of the old Ford had been arranged by the Party was true.

Moreover, Josephine Herbst, wife of a member of the Communist underground in Washington, recalled Hiss's belonging to the group and meeting Chambers. All of this

would have been ruinous to Hiss if revealed, and one of the defence's chief problems was keeping it from coming to light.

Chambers died in 1961, but although he was a pathological liar his story has held up remarkably well. Hiss, with his scrupulous desire to tell the truth, seems not to have done so. We do know that a Communist underground group existed in Washington in the 1930s, and that its members included Lee Pressman, who gave Hiss his first government job, John Abt, Hal Ware and Nathan Witt, all graduates of Harvard Law School like Hiss.

We can guess that some personal grudge, possibly rejected homosexual love or envy of Hiss's apparently effortless rise to success, might have in part motivated Chambers. But he only faltered once at the HUAC hearings in 1948. That was when he said through tears

that while he had always liked Hiss he had to testify against him now "with remorse and pity, but in a moment of history in which this nation now stands, so help me God, I could not do otherwise".

Now that the Cold War is over it is hard to recreate the dreadful atmosphere from the era of Titus Oates which suffused the late 1940s in America. The Hiss-Chambers case was decisive in poisoning that atmosphere still further. Hiss spent nearly 30 years trying to prove he was its most innocent victim. Now that he has died, the last hope we had of learning the whole truth about his fascinating case has gone.

Patrick Renshaw

Alger Hiss, government servant, born Baltimore, Maryland 11 November 1904; married Priscilla Fawcett (died 1983; one son), 1935; Isabelle Johnson (died New York 15 November 1996).

Sir Hugh Willatt

Hugh Willatt was a tireless champion of the arts—especially the hard-pressed repertory or regional theatres, and notably during the 20 years, from 1955 to 1975, of his work with the Arts Council of Great Britain.

He was born in Nottingham in 1909. His father was a local solicitor, whose own enthusiasm for the theatre was eagerly adopted by the young Hugh at home, at school (Repton) and at Oxford (Pembroke College), and he became a keen supporter of the theatre wherever he was.

After university he qualified as a solicitor, joined the family firm of Hunt, Dickens and Willatt in Nottingham and in due course became a partner. He remained involved with amateur theatre through the Theatre Club Co-operative Arts Centre and was a loyal supporter of the local repertory company.

During the Second World War he served in the RAF, mostly in the Middle East and Italy, and after demobilisation in 1945 he returned to the law in Nottingham, and married Evelyn Gibbs, a distinguished painter and teacher.

The Arts Council of Great Britain, which had replaced CEMA (the Campaign for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts) after the war, had a regional office in Nottingham. This led to valuable and early personal contact between the Arts Council staff and Willatt.

There was a small converted cinema in the city operating with difficulty as a repertory theatre. The Willatts and other enthusiasts had for long been working towards the creation of a first-class subsidised repertory theatre, and in 1948 the Nottingham Theatre Trust was formed and acquired the repertory theatre, which it renamed the Nottingham Playhouse.

Hugh Willatt's father and later Hugh himself were members of the board. From its opening production in November 1949 it earned a reputation comparable to the oldest and best-established companies. This led to proposals for the

building of a new, larger, properly equipped playhouse. After local party-political squabbling and through skilful negotiations by Hugh Willatt a fine new playhouse designed by Peter Moro was opened in 1963.

In 1955 Willatt had been made a member of the Arts Council's drama panel and he became the panel's chairman in 1960. He had already in 1957 been appointed a member of the Arts Council itself, and in 1959, after he joined the London solicitors Lewis, Silkin and Partners, he and his wife moved to London.

The Arts Council appointments led to service on a variety of sub-committees, special inquiries which studied in detail a wide range of the Arts Council's problems, and which went to the heart of the arts themselves. This proved invaluable to Willatt when in 1968 he was appointed the Secretary-General of the Arts Council.

These years were I think Hugh Willatt's happy time; he was in touch with pretty well everything going on in the rapidly expanding and changing expression of all the arts and under the chairmanship of the remarkable Lord Goodman. With increasing grant aid, but never quite enough, it nevertheless seemed possible that the arts might before too long become properly subsidised and cared for. This is reflected in the annual reports by Willatt as Secretary-General and in reports of inquiries under his chairmanship of the drama panel. They are worth studying to see the slippage since then.

Willatt was knighted in 1972 and retired from the Arts Council in 1975—but he didn't retire from serving the arts. He joined the Council of the English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre, and became chairman of the Riverside Studios at Hammersmith. He was trustee of the Mercury Theatre (Ballet Rambert) and one of Marie Rambert's executors when she died in 1982. He was also chairman of the National Opera Studio and a trustee of Shakespeare's Birthplace.

Hugh Willatt was always ready to talk—or gossip—about what might have seemed "shop", but was really lifeblood to him. I never heard him malicious or cruel in his comments about even the few people he thought tiresome. He liked people, and he was easy to like.

Dick Linklater

Hugh Willatt, lawyer and arts administrator, born Nottingham 25 April 1909; Secretary-General, Arts Council 1968-75; KB 1972; married 1945 Evelyn Gibbs (died 1991); died 18 October 1996.

Willatt: serving the arts
Photograph: Hulton Getty

Professor David Bradmore

David Blackmore was a pioneer in the science of animal welfare. He applied his energy, science and enthusiasm to strip away the shrouds of statistics, politics and opinions and make a unique contribution to improving the welfare of domestic and wild animals.

In 1991 Blackmore was asked by the New Zealand government to prepare a paper for the International Whaling Commission (IWC) on the humaneness of the methods used for the slaughter and euthanasia of whales. His paper indicated areas of concern and a need for investigation to ensure that stranded whales, unable to be returned to the sea, were slaughtered using pain-free methods.

So it was in supposed retirement, and despite failing health, that Blackmore established the New Zealand Centre for the Study of the Welfare of Whales in 1992. He initially gathered together a team of leading scientists to carry out basic anatomical and biophysical



Blackmore: whale welfare

studies of whales, working only on dead whales from strandings. The team pioneered unique research. They developed a method of obtaining acrylic replicas of the arterial system supplying blood to the brain of whales. The local hospital allowed the use of its CT scanner to provide detailed examinations of the heads. Trials with explosives, projectiles and electricity have been carried out. Blackmore and his team dis-

covered new data about the anatomy and physiology of whales including how the blood is supplied to the brain and how they echo-locate.

Blackmore graduated from London University with a BSc in veterinary science and four prizes for academic excellence. Three years in general practice won him the William Hunting Prize for his work on ovine oestrius. As Lecturer in Pathology at his Alma Mater, his work on chlorinated hydrocarbon insecticide poisoning in foxes earned Blackmore the Fellowship of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Following six years with Petfoods Ltd, in 1967 he moved to the Medical Research Council Laboratory Animals Centre in Carshalton, Surrey, as Pathologist and Deputy Director. Blackmore's research developed the use of germ-free and gnotobiotic animals (animals born in a sterile environment with no inherited immunities) as a means of making animal research more scientifically valid.

He gained an international reputation as a humorist with his article in the *Veterinary Record* in the early Seventies entitled "Some Observations on the Diseases of *Brunus Edwardii* (*Species Nova*)", on a range of "diseases" suffered by the teddy bear.

In 1973 the Blackmore family moved to New Zealand, where Blackmore took up the newly established chair in Veterinary Public Health and Meat Hygiene at Massey University in Palmerston North. It was a critical time for the meat industry in New Zealand and Blackmore used the best experimental approaches to improve and assure quality. Postgraduate training programmes were developed, spreading his influence into the broad field of veterinary public health in New Zealand and overseas. He made a major advance in research into zoonotic disease, virtually eliminating leptospirosis—a disease leading to abortion in cows—caught by farmers from cows.

Blackmore's most dramatic

impact in the last two years was at the meetings of the International Whaling Commission. Japanese whalers in the Antarctic use an electric current to kill whales still alive after the impact of the exploding harpoon. Blackmore scientifically proved that the electric lance is ineffective and unacceptable cruelty. Supported by Britain and New Zealand, he led the initiative to ban the lance. With Norway supporting Japan, Blackmore's combat with the highly accomplished Norwegian veterinary scientists is already legendary. Despite the politics, the lance will be banned by the IWC in the next couple of years.

Jennifer Lonsdale

David Killock Blackmore, veterinarian, born 10 May 1931; Professor of Veterinary Public Health and Meat Hygiene, Massey University 1973-89 (*Emeritus*); CBE 1990; married 1953 June Whiston (two sons, one daughter); died Palmerston North, New Zealand 10 November 1996.

Enrique Molina

It is not easy to imagine in these post-modern times the magnitude of the blow caused by the death of a poet. When the Argentine poet Enrique Molina died in the small hours of Thursday aged 86, the newspaper *La Nación* stopped the press to run a short down obituary. Next day the main hall of the National Library in Buenos Aires was made available for the wake of the body of the man who had become a point of literary reference not just for Argentine poets but for those of all Latin America.

A contemporary in stylistic debate with Jorge Luis Borges, and with a generation before them, Molina was a quiet man, who had avoided political controversy (not an easy thing to do in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s) to establish his own poetic world. When we met, in 1983, at the PEN Congress in Caracas, Venezuela, my own status was that of a former political fugitive. He looked at me for a long time in silence over a well-laden lunch table

(Venezuela had a lot of oil money in those days), then remarked: "You know, I'm an Argentine and I should understand your plight. But I can't explain why I don't understand. Poets have always been escaping the stupidity of people, so I cannot sympathise with your difficulties."

Molina started out as a merchant seaman, at 16, after an early life in several Argentine provinces. The women in his early poems belong to that period. He was also something of an artist, though he did not exhibit until 1968.

In 1996 when Argentina has already lost one of its leading poets (Ricardo Molinari died on 31 July, aged 98), Molina's death adds to the intellectual anxiety of a country coming out of half a century of authoritarian rule.

Molina was a prolific contributor to the Sunday literary pages, but he started with *Las cosas y el delirio* ("Things and Delirium") in 1941, which was awarded the Argentine Writers

Society (SADE) award—which in those days had some standing—and from there he never looked back. At least a dozen collections of selected poems followed. The Mexican Nobel prizewinner Octavio Paz and a whole gallery of literary lions voted essays and articles in his poetry.

Molina's *Una sombra donde sueña Camila O'Gorman* ("A Shadow Where Camila O'Gorman Sleeps", 1973) was his only quasi-political collection and was used by Maria Luisa Bemberg for her prize-winning film on one of Argentina's 19th-century victims of political and religious bigotry.

Molina will remain best known in the Latin American world, and only in small doses on the Anglo-Saxon academic circuit. But in Buenos Aires he will have his place in the gallery of the greats.

Andrew Graham-Yooll

Enrique Saturnino C. Molina, poet, born Buenos Aires 1910; died 14 November 1996.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2016, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS
The Duke of Edinburgh visits the Stirling Centre for Judaism, London N3; and as Senior Fellow, attends the Royal Academy of Engineering New Fellows' Dinner at Drapers' Hall, London EC2. The Prince of Wales opens the new rural social housing development at Strimling Way, Hampshire. Princess Margaret, Patron, Youth Clubs, South, attends the Finals of the BP Youth Clubs, Scotland Grizzly Challenge and Golf Kids Project at Edinburgh Conference Centre, Heriot Watt University, Riccarton, Edinburgh. The Duke of Gloucester visits Irvine New Town and opens Wilson House, Havelock Village, Strimling, Ayrshire.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. F Company Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Irish Guards.

Birthdays

The Right Rev Dewi Bridges, Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, 63; Mr John Camden, president, RMC Group, 71; Mr Anthony Coombs MP, 44; Professor Charles Cowan, former Chairman of Convocation, London University, 73; Lord Cullen, a Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 61; The Rev Vivian Green, former Rector, Lincoln College, Oxford, 81; Mr David Hammonds, actor and director, 55; Mr John Hoyer, former Director, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, 68; Sir Gordon Jewkes, former diplomat, 65; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Leach, chairman of St Dunstan's (for Service War Blind), 73; Lord Macdonald-Stuart, former European Court judge, 72; Mr Alan Hynes-Jones, author and critic, 88; Professor John Quayle, former Vice-Chancellor, Bath University, 70; Mr Brian Quinn, executive director, Bank of England, 60; Mr Alan Stephens, astronaut, 73; Sir Murray Stuart-Smith, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 69; Miss Brenda Vaccaro, actress, 57; Sir Tinker Watkins VC, a former Lord Justice of Appeal, and former Deputy Chief Justice of England, 78; Miss Kim Wilde, singer, 36.

Anniversaries

Births: Roman Emperor, AD 9; Louis-Jacques Mandé Daguerre, photographic pioneer, 1789;

Sir William Schwenck Gilbert, playwright and librettist, 1836; Ignaz Jan Paderewski, pianist, composer and statesman, 1860; Percy Wyndham Lewis, artist and writer, at sea 1882; George Horace Gallup, public opinion pollster, 1901; Deaths: Marcel Proust, author, 1922; Niels Henrik David Bohr, physicist, 1962; Mervyn Laurence Peake, author and artist, 1968. On this day: William Caxton issued his first dated, printed book, 1477; St Peter's, Rome, was consecrated, 1626; *First Mickey Mouse cartoon—Steamboat Willie* was shown, 1928; fire broke out at King's Cross underground station, and 30 people died, 1987. Today is the Feast Day of St Mawes or Maudez, St Odo of Cluny and St Romanus of Antioch.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Charlotte Cotton, "Classic American Photography", 2.30pm. Gresham College: Bernard's Ian Hall, London EC1: Joan Bakewell, "The Media and Religion", 5.30pm.

Professor Edith Penrose

A memorial celebration for Professor Edith Penrose will be held at the London University School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1, on Saturday 14 December at 11.30am. Enquiries to 01223 862352.

The following notes of judgments were prepared by the reporters of the *All England Law Reports*.

Judicial notice

Hackney LBC v Mullens CA (Waite, Seville, Oates LJ) 18 Oct 1996.

A county court judge was entitled, when imposing a £5,000 fine on a local housing authority for its contempt in breaching an undertaking to perform its repairing obligations under a lease, to take judicial notice of numerous instances of past contempt in other claims against the authority by its tenants. Since the trial judge, who had sat for some 10 years at that court, was able to consult court records as well as draw on his own experience, the authority's bad record was sufficiently notorious to be something of which he could take judicial notice.

Ranjit Bhose (Christopher Hinde, Hackney) for the council; the plaintiff did not appear.

Property

Trustee in Bankruptcy of Vernon John Schuppman v Jennifer Kay Schuppman;

CAD (Judge Muddocks) 28 Oct 1996.

The principle enunciated by Lord Bridge in *Lloyds Bank plc v Rosset* [1991] 1 AC 107 at 132, that a partner who acted in reliance on a prior agreement that real property owned by another was to be shared beneficially was entitled to the grant of a constructive trust, was not defeated by the fact that the other party's ownership of the property was effected through the medium of a wholly owned company.

Robyn Knowles (Trevor Smith British-wait) for the trustee; Mrs Schuppman in person.

Sentencing

R v Grimsey & Cleethorpes JJ, ex p Walters; QB Div Ct (Bingham LJ, Blfield J) 22 Oct 1996.

Where justices having dealt with a defendant for various offences of dishonesty, sentencing him to two months' imprisonment, then went on to commit him to a consecutive

CASE SUMMARIES

18 November 1996

term for an entirely discrete matter involving non-payment of fines and compensation orders, they need not inquire as to alternative means of dealing with the defendant under s 82 of the Magistrates Courts Act 1980, since he was already bound to serve a term of imprisonment for the dishonesty offences.

Jon Wice (Chattertons, Boston) for the applicant; the respondent was not represented and did not appear.

R v Harrow JJ, ex p Jordan; QB Div Ct (Bingham LJ, Blfield J) 21 Oct 1996.

A magistrates' court could not convict a defendant for a summary offence committed whilst he was on licence, sentence him, and then commit him to the Crown Court to deal with revocation of the licence. Section 40(3)(b) of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 suggested the power to deal with an existing offence and the question of return had either to be dealt with

in both cases by the magistrates' court or by the Crown Court. Although a magistrates' court had power to deal with both matters, the better course was to commit both to the Crown Court.

Sarah Maguire (Blackman van Emden) for the applicant; Stephen John (CPS) for the respondent.

Tax

Inland Revenue Comrs v Universal-Desuperannuation Scheme Ltd; ChD (Sir John Vinelott) 30 Oct 1996.

A pension scheme which was exempt from tax was nevertheless capable of obtaining a "tax advantage" within s 709(1) of the Income & Corporation Taxes Act 1988 for the purposes of the anti-avoidance provisions in ss 703 and 704. The court declined to follow the holding in *Sheppard (Trustees of Woodland Trust) v Inland Revenue Comrs* (No 2) [1992] STC 461, that an already exempt body was incapable of obtaining a tax advantage. Where "relief" was in issue, as opposed to the ex-

emption itself, an exempt body might be regarded as obtaining a "relief" from tax and thus obtaining a "tax advantage". *Lamuel Henderson QC (Inland Revenue Comrs) v David Milne QC, Roger Thomas (Also as Depd Lupton, Liverpool) for USS Ltd*.

VAT

R v City of London Magistrates, ex p Peters; QB Div Ct (Blfield and Patten JJ) 23 Oct 1996.

An access order, made under para 11 of Sch 11 to the Value Added Tax Act 1994, which stated on its face that a magistrate had "reasonable grounds to suspect" that an offence in connection with VAT had been committed and that the bank to which the order was directed was in possession of recorded information which might be required as evidence in proceedings in respect of such offence, was not defective simply because it failed to state the grounds which had persuaded the magistrate to make it. *Robin Matthews QC, Gordon Bennett (Nathan Salomon) for the applicant; David Burnard (Cottons and Eichel) for the respondent*.

Granada makes a handsome profit from sitting on Forte's trophies

When Granada emerged victorious from the thunderous battle for control of the Forte catering and hotel group early this year the stock market was convinced a string of hasty sales would quickly follow.

After all, the £3.9bn takeover severely stretched the leisure group and ran the conventional wisdom, it had to sell Forte assets as quickly as possible to prevent its borrowings getting out of hand.

But the maker of the *Coronation Street* soap opera has, not for the first time, wrong-footed the stock market.

Sales have been conspicuously slow to materialise as Granada has discovered, against a low interest rate background, there is no need for hurried disposals and it could bide its time in the pursuit of winning a few extra pounds out of each deal.

So not a great deal has been unloaded. A portfolio of country hotels went for

£121.7m to Regal Hotels and Mohamed Al Fayed, the Harrods chief, took time off from his battle with the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, to snap up 25 per cent of Alpha Airports, the aircraft services group, for £52.4m.

He has since moved to nearly 28 per cent. Granada has also sold some pre-Forte business, such as the Spring Grove linen hire company, for £136.5m.

It could be argued the Alpha deal justified the softly, softly approach as Granada collected 125p a share, a sharp premium to the then ruling market price.

So most of the Forte trophies ear-marked for sale remain in the group's ownership. Talks are going on - but it is perfectly clear Granada is in no hurry. The upmarket hotels, expected to be early casualties of the debt mountain, are likely to be sold, probably in lots, early next year.

Control of the Savoy Hotel

chain remains with Granada, although some suspect a deal may be near.

And Welcome Break, the motorway service stations expected to be the subject of the first sale, is still part of the Granada empire.

Chairman Gerry Robinson has in the meantime pushed up margins, particularly in the service stations and budget hotels.

Fraser Ramzan at the Lehman Brothers securities house expects profits this week to emerge at £451m with share earnings up from 39.1p to 40.9p.

He ponders the future of a pre-Forte asset - the group's 10.8 per cent shareholding in BSkyB. The stake is worth more than £900m at the current BSkyB price. It is in Granada's books at £80m.

Granada could, of course, reap a rich reward by selling the stake; it could even do a Rupert Murdoch and raise loans

against it. There is also the prospect, put forward by Mr Ramzan, that the BSkyB shares could be distributed among Granada shareholders.

Share spotlight

STOCK MARKET WEEK

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

Certainly, BSkyB offers Granada the ammunition to launch a bid for Yorkshire-Tees TV, of which it has 27 per cent and would like full control. Since the broadcasting open season was declared at the start of the month, corporate action has been surprisingly absent.

Could Granada once again wrong-foot the market by accompanying this week's results with the long-awaited strike at Yorkshire? Or, more audaciously, shoot for Manchester Utd?

After all, it announced its Forte bid with its yearly figures last year. Its shares have been strong since the Forte acquisition; at-

ter a 629p low in January they ended last week at 889.5p, near their peak. Mr Ramzan sees them at 950p.

Although Granada shares are riding high, the rest of the market has faltered after hitting a record nearly a month ago. Yet New York has soared resolutely to new highs, increasing the yawning gap between Footsie and the Dow Jones Average.

Interest rate worries, the rampant display by sterling and political uncertainties have eroded confidence. Even so, there is a strong body of opinion suggesting that shares will enjoy their traditional Christmas spree.

Irony-up to the festive season is often a jolly time for share prices although trading volume is thin, providing little in the way of Christmas comforts for the traders who struggle into the City during the Christmas holidays.

As is often the case, the

market has not performed to expectations. There was, after last year's takeover stampede, expected to be a rush of deals this year. But bid action has not been particularly heavy.

It was felt the market would perform well in the first six months and then fade in the second half. In the event the second six months have been more lively than the first.

Strategists expecting a sober end to the year include Mark Brown (ABN Amro Hoare Govett), who is looking for Footsie to end at 3,700 points; Ian Williams (Pammure Gordon) with 3,800 and Bob Semple and David McBain at NatWest Securities on 3,900.

Among other results due this week are interim figures from Storaenso. Its shares are bumping along at their year's low. Tony Cooper at Greig Middleton expects £36m (£33.3m) before exceptional charges.

Half-year figures from Voda-

fone should be up from £202m to £230m but National Power has already indicated its interim figures will be down and the market is looking for around £210m against £254m.

EMI, the showbiz group, spins its first interim profits performance since its demerger from the Thorn rental side. NatWest is looking for £97m against £105.8m.

It is clear that the music industry is having a poor year and sentiment was unsettled by last month's profit warning from rivals PolyGram. The failure of the expected predator to appear has also contributed to the poor performance by the shares.

Among others on the interim results include this week are Cable & Wireless, where £660m against £616m seems likely, and Safeway (£230m against £215.2m). Unigate should manage £55.5m (£60.4m) and Northern Foods £58m (£57.2m).

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: £ for rights; Ex-dividend a £ at a United Securities Market & Suspended per Parity Paid per Share, 2 AM Stock. Source: FT Information

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Interest Rates

UK	Germany	France	Italy	Spain
Base	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Prime	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Discount	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Advances	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%

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business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

British Gas boosted by takeover rumours

Peter Rodgers
Financial Editor

Speculation that a number of predators have shown an interest in acquiring British Gas is likely to heighten this week, following a report yesterday that Shell has approached Richard Giordano, the chairman, with a takeover proposal. British Gas and Shell both refused to be drawn into confirming or denying the claimed talks, which have been rumoured in the stock market for several weeks. They said that

they did not comment on market rumour and speculation.

There was no evidence yesterday of any imminent deal, and sources familiar with the companies suggested that whatever discussions might have taken place in the past, the idea was by now dead and buried. One source said: "Even if it is right, it must have been long in the past and at a very immature stage, because it had not got to the point of bringing advisers in."

Other City sources said that British Gas management was

heavily loaded with work on the demerger planned for next year which will break the company in two, and on the Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry, which is to report by April.

They said that whatever the past discussions, the company had no spare management capacity to deal with the complexities of a possible takeover, which would be bound to be referred to the MMC because Shell is one of British Gas's biggest suppliers.

However, if an approach in the recent past from Shell is

confirmed, institutional shareholders in British Gas are likely to be angry that it was not explored further.

A bid could be at a substantial price premium, and could give investors a better deal than the company's own demerger plan. The persistence of the reports of talks could prompt questions to the companies from the Stock Exchange about whether a statement is necessary.

Shell would have no trouble swallowing British Gas. Its UK arm is more than three times as

valuable and the world-wide Royal Dutch Shell group is worth nearly 10 times as much.

Any takeover of British Gas would have to be at a substantial premium to British Gas's £9bn market capitalisation, which rose steadily last week as rumours swirled around the company. The price closed at 209p on Friday, up 17.5p on the week.

The *Sunday Telegraph* reported yesterday that secret Shell documents detailed a proposed takeover under the code-name "Project Napoleon"

which had been discussed with Mr Giordano of British Gas, who had made counter-proposals of his own.

The documents were said to allude to both Shell and British Gas proposals and the possibility of counter bidders, and they suggested an acquisition timetable of the end of 1996.

Recent speculation in the City has suggested that talks between Shell and British Gas fell apart when British Gas got cold feet because it was so far down the route to a demerger. Shell was said to be interested

only in an agreed takeover, and let the matter drop.

The City believes that a number of large energy companies have done the arithmetic of a takeover of British Gas, attracted by its huge customer database which gives it a head start in a domestic gas market newly opened to competition.

Interest in British Gas is not new. BP is one of the oil giants known to have examined the idea of a takeover before privatisation, but it decided against making an offer for the na-

tionalised company. It is widely thought to have looked at the idea more recently, but to have rejected it again.

British Gas owns the lucrative but highly regulated gas transmission business, the supply business that sells to domestic customers and exploration and production interests, including the lucrative Morecambe Bay gas field.

A takeover by a big gas producer would raise monopolies problems and perhaps require divestment of some of the assets.

£8bn Telekom five times subscribed in record sell-off

Peter Rodgers
Financial Editor

The transformation of Germany into a nation of small shareholders got under way yesterday, when the record-breaking DM20bn (£8bn) Deutsche Telekom flotation was five times subscribed worldwide and won an unexpectedly high level of interest from domestic private investors.

German investors have traditionally fought shy of investment in the stock market, seeing it as too risky, and stuck to other financial instruments such as bonds.

But German businessmen and bankers were delighted with what they saw as the start of a shareholder revolution at home. Ron Sommer, chief executive of Deutsche Telekom, said the company had been unusually successful in drumming up interest from private shareholders in Germany, attracting priority applications from 1.4 million.

Ronald Schmitz, a board member of Deutsche Bank, which speaks for the investment banks handling the global sale, said: "The private shareholder has been pronounced dead many times and now look, here he is... Germany's financial landscape has changed for the better." He said it was a good sign for other German companies considering going public.

The 285 million shares allocated to German retail investors - which are likely to be raised

to 315 million - were three times subscribed.

The price was set at DM28.50 a share, slightly lower than the market had expected and below the top of the DM25-DM30 range announced in advance. There was a 50 pfennig discount for retail investors.

Small shareholders have been bombarded by Deutsche Telekom in a blanket advertising campaign offering discounts and special bonuses, in an attempt to create the same sort of public enthusiasm for equity investment that Mrs Thatcher stirred for during the 1980s privatisations in Britain. Only 5 per cent of German private investments are held in shares.

Deutsche Telekom is Europe's biggest flotation and the second-largest in the world, with total applications worth DM100bn chasing DM20bn of shares, in a privatisation marketing campaign modelled closely on those pioneered in Britain.

Two-thirds of the total of 600 million shares allocated - excluding 90 million kept back which are likely to be allocated later - went to Germany, with private shareholders receiving substantially more than institutions.

The US took 14 per cent of the issue, the UK 8 per cent, the rest of Europe 6 per cent and the Far East 5 per cent, so foreign investors received one-third of the total.

One impetus behind the growth in German private

share ownership is the fact that, with interest rates in Germany and elsewhere at historically low levels, rates of return from bonds are low. German companies have also been focusing on dividend payments and trying to shed their uncaring image towards shareholders.

Mr Schmitz of Deutsche Bank said: "Banks are prepared to learn the lesson from the Telekom issue. There are important signs of liquidity in the market and Telekom shows us just what to do to activate this liquidity."

"There is a desire to create long-term shareholders and there is a need for incentives to keep investors interested. The banks are being invited to understand this issue as a huge opportunity."

Telekom shares, which will immediately take a dominant role in Germany's 30-share DAX stock market index, will begin trading on 18 November.

Nicole Cousins, telecoms analyst at Bank Julius Baer in Frankfurt, said she believed the lower-than-expected price for the issue meant there was a good chance of price gains once trading began.

"DM 28.50 is below our expectations, we thought it would come in at the high end of the range. Based on our benchmarks we thought it was fairly valued at DM30."

The chief financial officer of Deutsche Telekom, Joachim Kroeske, said that proceeds would be used to settle debts.



Andy Lown, managing director of Tower Records, yesterday stepped up his one-man crusade against large supermarkets which sell cut-price compact discs and video tapes by offering fruit and vegetables at knock-down prices for a limited period at the music retailer's flagship store in Piccadilly Circus, London. Cabbages, carrots and bananas jostled for

shelf space next to Tower's cosmopolitan range of chart singles, Garage music and fetish books as Mr Lown launched a tirade against the likes of Asda and Tesco. "Cut-price campaigns by supermarkets may benefit customers in the short term, but in the long term they limit choice and restrict the creative development of new artists," he said.

"It is very alarming to see supermarkets simply creaming off the profits as soon as new bands reach the charts." Mr Lown is particularly concerned about Asda's recently launched campaign, where stores sell all videos, CDs and other music ranges at VAT-free prices.

Photograph: Philip Meech

£500m Qatar arms deal benefits UK firms

British Aerospace, GKN, Vespene Thornycroft, and Short Brothers are among the British companies sharing a £500m arms deal signed yesterday in Qatar by Balfour Beatty, the defence secretary, and Sheikh Ahmed bin Saif Al Thani, Qatar minister of state.

The deal includes GKN Piranha armoured personnel carriers, Vespene Thornycroft

46-metre patrol boats, British Aerospace Hawk training aircraft, and Starburst missiles by Shorts Missile Systems, a joint venture between Short Brothers of Belfast and Thomson-CSF of France.

The contract will help secure 500 jobs at Shorts Missile Systems. It is the second export of the Starburst missile to the Middle East and the company

is marketing it strongly among a number of other countries in the Gulf region.

The deal was the second large defence contract for Britain in a week. Australia announced a £1bn order for Hawk aircraft last Monday.

It was also the first large arms sale for Britain in the Gulf for years. The British have lost out to the United States and France

in weapons sales to the oil-rich region.

Qatar is in the process of modernising its armed forces, now equipped mostly with French-made arms. Britain is also competing with American and French arms manufacturers to sell 50 main battle tanks to Qatar's 8,000-strong army.

Mr Portillo said after talks in Doha last month that he had offered a comprehensive Gulf security proposal to Qatar. Diplomats said the offer was part of a British bid to find a fresh foothold in Gulf Arab states from which it voluntarily withdrew in 1971.

Mr Portillo said: "This understanding further enhances the already broad defence relationship between Qatar and the United Kingdom."

Wates plans to build new City skyscraper

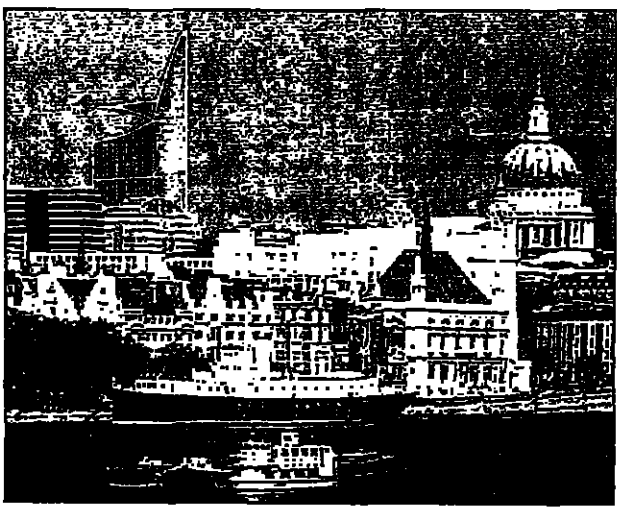
Plans to build a second tall tower in the City of London have been submitted by Wates City, the quoted property group, writes Patrick Toher.

The scheme involves redeveloping the Britannia Tower in Moorgate, bought earlier this year for £30m from British Petroleum, to create a new glass and steel building 666 feet high - slightly smaller than the Canary Wharf tower in London's Docklands.

It would contain 37 floors of office space, street-level shops and would be topped off with what would be London's highest restaurant.

Designed by the Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, the tower, called City Point, would be smaller than the controversial £400m Millennium project designed by Sir Norman Foster which has yet to win local planning approval.

Construction costs for Wates's £36,000 sq ft scheme are estimated to be £100m and joint managing director Rodney



Tall storeys: How the Wates tower might look

Coulton admits funding is still at an early stage. "Obviously the scheme will not be pursued until we have satisfactory pre-letting and financing arrangements in place," he said.

"Clearly we will always have the option to redevelop on the rather conservative set of assumptions upon which we acquired the site, which would create less space in a good building but at a lower cost."

Mutual status adds 15% to bonuses, says Friends chief

Peter Rodgers
Financial Editor

Michael Doerr, chief executive of the insurer Friends Provident, said yesterday that mutually added about 15 per cent to his policyholders' bonuses, compared with the returns they would get if Friends were a conventional company.

In a staunch defence of mutual status and its benefits for customers, Mr Doerr said: "I think the record over the years bears out our contention that mutuals can earn a better return for their policyholders than proprietary companies."

In an interview with the *Independent* he was also sceptical about Norwich Union's £4bn

flotation planned for next year, saying he was puzzled by the numbers that had been reported, which did not make it clear where the value to back the share distribution came from.

However, Mr Doerr said the Norwich announcement had prompted Friends Provident to analyse the benefits and drawbacks of dropping mutual status.

Mr Doerr said that Friends looked into how much the mutual status added to its bonuses. The 15 per cent improvement was equivalent to about one percentage point on annual yields for policyholders, said Mr Doerr, who added that Friends had "never had any intention of doing anything other than staying mutual".

The claims made by Mr Doerr are similar to promises of better returns for customers made by Nationwide and other building societies that plan to stay mutual. They suggest a similar argument is breaking out among the insurers.

Mr Doerr said Friends Provident's returns from fund management and from unit-linked insurance business belonged to with-profit policyholders.

"If we demutualise, the returns from fund management and non-with-profits business would all go into a separate shareholders' fund," he said.

A key factor in the arithmetic is that Friends has diversified, and only 60 per cent of the business is with-profits policies.

IN BRIEF

• Confusion over the Labour Party's proposed windfall tax on utilities increased over the weekend when a leading frontbencher suggested every privatised company was a possible target for the controversial levy. "We do not rule out any of the privatised companies and we have approached them all on the same basis," said Margaret Beckett, Labour's shadow trade and industry minister, and former acting leader of the party. "We will have a consistent set of criteria and we will look at whatever companies we find after the election. You cannot rule out any section of the privatised companies." Although Mrs Beckett later said she was referring to the utilities alone, her actual words, during Channel Four's *A Week in Politics* programme, appeared to suggest that privatised companies such as British Steel, Rolls-Royce or even Amersham International could be subjected to the windfall tax.

• An Anglo-American consortium including British Aerospace has lost out in a huge Pentagon contract, potentially worth more than £100bn, to build 3,000 fighter jets for the 21st century. The Pentagon rejected BAE's bid for the superonic jump-jet Joint Strike Fighter programme in a consortium with McDonnell Douglas and Northrop Grumman. Teams led by Lockheed Martin and Boeing will compete for the massive development and production programme.

• Standard Chartered is considering divesting its Mocatta gold bullion and base metals trading arm, which is not considered part of the bank's core business, for up to £200m, according to weekend press reports. No one at Standard Chartered was available to comment.

• Dominion Resources and CalEnergy, the two US utilities bidding for East Midlands Electricity and Northern Electric respectively, played down weekend reports that worries about their environmental record could increase pressure for their proposed takeovers to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

• Williams, the industrial conglomerate, is planning a £1bn disposals programme over the next 18 months as it focuses on its security and fire-fighting equipment businesses. A report in the *Independent* on Sunday said proceeds from the sale of the building products and home improvements businesses would also be used to reduce Williams' debt burden.

• London is subsidising the rest of the UK economy to the tune of £6.2bn, according to a report published today. If the capital disappeared overnight people elsewhere would face a rise in the basic rate of income tax of 8.5p in the pound to maintain the level of services received, says the London Chamber of Commerce.

• British firms are spending £66bn more on contracting out work than they did in 1989, according to a report out today by the Foundation for Manufacturing and Industry.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
Index	Close	Week's chg	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low	YTD (%)			
FTSE 100	3958.20	+47.4	+1.2	4073.10	3632.30	3.99			
FTSE 250	4409.90	+14.3	+0.3	4568.90	4015.30	3.54			
FTSE 350	1973.30	+19.9	+1.0	2022.10	1816.60	3.90			
FTSE SmallCap	2185.37	+6.5	+0.3	2244.36	1954.05	3.15			
FTSE All-Share	1948.15	+18.6	+1.0	1994.54	1791.95	3.84			
New York	8348.03	+128.2	+1.5	8378.73	8032.94	2.09			
Tokyo	20929.73	-271.3	-1.3	22856.80	19734.70	0.77			
Hong Kong	12889.37	+138.2	+1.1	13004.80	10204.67	3.20			
Frankfurt	2795.90	+58.0	+2.0	2795.90	2253.36	1.71			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
UK interest rates									
US interest rates									
Money Market Rates									
Index	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	Long Term	YTD (%)	YTD (%)
UK	6.06	6.83	7.55	7.73	7.80	7.86	8.23		
US	5.25	5.72	6.15	6.50	6.53	6.53	6.53		
Japan	0.41	0.66	2.88	2.75					
Germany	3.06	3.28	3.83	6.50	6.70				

* Bank of England base rate

CURRENCIES									
£/\$									
£/DM									
Pound vs.									
Index	Close	Week's chg	Change (%)	1996 High	1996 Low	YTD (%)			
\$ (London)	1.6665	+2.18c	+1.30	1.6910	1.6447	3.04			
\$ (New York)	1.6550	+0.70c	+0.42	1.6800	1.6448	2.99			
DM (London)	2.5194	+3.65c	+1.45	2.5800	2.4948	3.84			
¥ (London)	166.143	+11.67	+7.02	178.702	150.250	4.65			
£ Index	92.0	+1.2	+1.3	92.3	90.2	2.33			

* Other indicators

Oil Brent \$ 23.78 -0.05 16.90 RPI 153.8 +2.7pct 149.7 12 Dec

Gold \$ 379.46 -3.20 386.50 GDP 109.9 +2.3pct 105.7 Jan 27

Gold £ 227.69 -3.35 249.02 Base Rates - 6.00pc 6.75 -

مكتبة الامم



BILL ROBINSON

The main difference between public spending and private spending is that public money is wasted out of sheer inertia. We go on giving aid to Hong Kong (richer than we are) or building tanks to fight the Russians (they're on our side now) just because we always have

Why the politics of public spending do matter

Public spending has risen inexorably this century, from little over 10 per cent of GDP to nearly half. Even after 16 years of Conservative governments dedicated to rolling back the frontiers of the state, the public spending ratio stands at over 40 per cent, having risen sharply in the recession of the early 1990s. Must it inevitably go on rising, until the levels considered normal in wartime (or in Scandinavia) become the peacetime norm in Britain?

An interesting new paper, *Prospects for Public Spending*, Social Market Foundation by Andrew Tyrie, former Treasury adviser to Chancellors Lawson and Major, suggests not. He argues that the forces restraining the growth of public spending have been enormously strengthened by the free movement of capital, now the norm in the developed world. The bond markets impose a strict discipline on policymakers, making it difficult to finance extra spending by government borrowing. As a result, the connection between high spending and high taxes is becoming clearer, and the desire for lower taxes is being harnessed in the cause of public expenditure control.

There is some support for the Tyrie thesis – and some pointers to the future – in recent events. The fiscal position, actual and projected, is better today than was forecast in the March 1993 Budget (the first after the election) and, remarkably, this progress has been achieved mainly by better control over public spending. This is arguably the result of an unnoticed revolution in the conduct of fiscal policy which has improved our governance as much as the highly publicised changes in the conduct of monetary policy. What both changes show is that institutional arrangements can have a huge effect, for better or for worse, on the quality of decisions.

In monetary policy that is obvious. Not long ago changes in interest rates were decided

at secret meetings between the Chancellor and the Governor at irregular intervals. There was no framework of published information. Little justification was given for rate changes, and none at all for a decision not to change rates.

Today we have published inflation targets and a quarterly progress report by the Bank of England. There are regular meetings between Chancellor and Governor on the first Wednesday of each month to review progress, and the reasons behind decisions to move or not move interest rates are subsequently published. This openness has given us better decisions, as we saw earlier this month when the good economic reasons for putting interest rates up prevailed over the bad political ones for keeping them down.

Fiscal policy operates on a longer time frame than monetary policy, and there has been a public framework for decision-making

ever since medium-term fiscal projections were introduced by Chancellor Howe in 1980. But the existence of that framework did not prevent a massive rise in public borrowing in the 1990 recession. The published targets were missed, and by a large margin.

Since then however there have been two important changes: the unified budget (greatly underestimated) and the EDX committee (almost unknown, except to a few cognoscenti). The unified budget, which presents tax and spending decisions together in a single document, has focused ministers' minds on the connection between tax and spending. In the past the high-profile tax changes announced each spring reflected spending decisions made the previous summer. In politics a week is a long time and six months is forever. The old "spend now, pay later" regime made it too easy to deal with political problems by throwing money at

them. The resulting tax demands were far away and hence too heavily discounted.

Under the new arrangements the tax consequences of every spending decision are immediately visible since both are announced on the same occasion. It has concentrated minds wonderfully. The benign effect of the unified budget has powerfully reinforced the other key change: the EDX committee. In the past the spending departments used to gang up on the Treasury and demand money with menaces. In Cabinet the spenders heavily outnumbered the Treasury team, and always had pressing political arguments for higher spending. As a result spending too often drifted upwards.

Under the new arrangement the powerful EDX Cabinet committee, a group of senior ministers chaired by the Chancellor, monitors progress against a spending total approved by Cabinet in advance. As a result all the players enter the spending round knowing that it is no longer a bear-bait (every one against the Treasury, which can be made to give ground) but a zero-sum game (to decide which of the many urgent spending priorities is actually the most urgent).

Together these two changes to the budget-making process have increased the political weight given to the general aim (low spending, low taxes) at the expense of one-off calls for extra spending. Mr Clarke has used the new machinery to keep his spending colleagues under control.

The success of the unified budget and the EDX committee prompts an obvious question: what other political/institutional changes might help reduce the public spending ratio? Mr Tyrie would like to make the average voter more aware of the size of his tax bill, and more critical of how the money is spent. He has long believed that pay-as-you-earn income tax collection is politically dangerous because it makes pay-

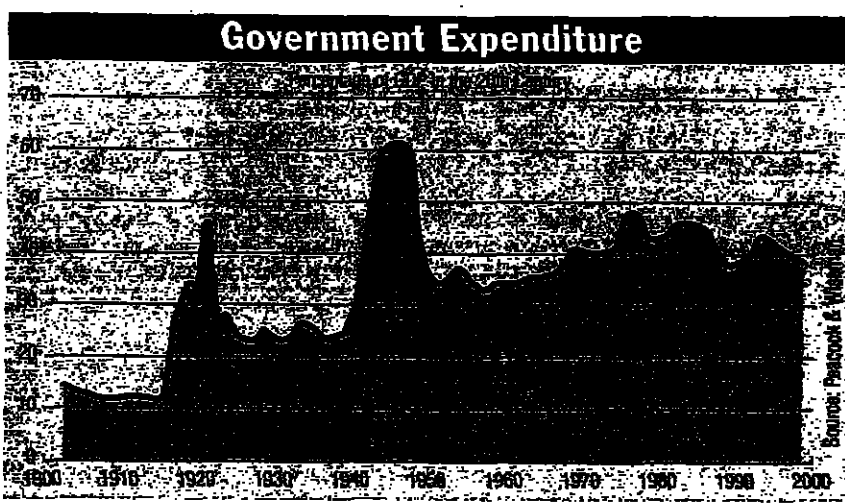
ing the tax too painless and leaves us unaware how much is taken from us. He would change this by introducing an annual statement telling us how much tax we pay each year and where it goes, and by requiring the VAT rate to appear on all invoices, receipts, credit card statements, price tags etc.

On the spending side, Mr Tyrie would put more muscle into the fundamental reviews of the spending departments. These reviews, inspired by the zero-based budgeting ideas imported from the US, are conducted under the usual shroud of Whitehall secrecy. Why not publish them? The main difference between public spending and private spending is that public money is wasted out of sheer inertia. We go on giving aid to Hong Kong (richer than we are) or building tanks to fight the Russians (they're on our side now) just because we always have.

Also, typically, there are powerful lobbies on hand to argue that disaster would ensue if we stopped. We need therefore to mobilise the public as a political counterweight to the spending lobbies. Requiring every department to explain and justify in public how it spent its money would make it much harder to keep obsolete spending categories off the public payroll.

Mr Tyrie is a refreshing optimist. He believes the ineluctable rise of the public spending ratio can be reversed. His chart shows that public spending hit a peak in 1976 and has arguably been on a downward trend ever since. (The rise in the early 1990s was partly the cycle and partly a pre-election accident which won't now be repeated.) But keeping the powerful pressures for higher spending in check requires radical and imaginative thinking. Mr Tyrie has made an excellent start but there is a long way to go.

Bill Robinson is a director of the consultancy London Economics



Resellers threaten phone giants

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Telephone giants such as BT face a massive explosion in price competition over the next 10 years from a host of bargain-basement operators that could take up to a third of their international call business, an influential consultancy group will report this week.

The new firms, known as "resellers", are fast becoming the bucket shops of the telephone industry. They make money by buying up bulk international call capacity from network operators such as BT and AT&T of the US at cut price and packing as many customers as possible onto the lines.

In typical cases, resale companies can slash the price of

overseas calls by up to half. Swiftcall, the Dublin-based resale firm, offers calls to the US for as little as 10p a minute, compared with BT's cheapest off-peak rate of 26.1p, though this excludes extra discounts from schemes such as its Friends and Family promotion.

With sales of some \$3.3bn (£1.99bn), resellers currently account for just over 4 per cent of the \$79bn global international phone call market. However, according to the report by Ovum, the telecommunications research group, the world-wide resale market will soar to \$31bn by 2005, giving the new companies 30 per cent of international call business.

In the UK the challenge looks set to be particularly severe, with revenues projected to

surge from £171m this year to about £1.39bn in the next 10 years.

BT is already feeling the impact of the resellers, and last week reported a 4.6 per cent fall in revenues from international calls between April and September, to \$941m. The drop was entirely due to price competition, with the raw volume of calls actually increasing by 8 per cent.

Although BT has cut more than £200m off its international call prices this year the research suggests it will have to slash charges much further to compete.

Stephen Young, the report's author, explained: "BT will sell less international calls to retail customers but more to a whole new set of wholesale customers

who buy up the capacity and sell it to the end-user."

There are already some 90 resale firms competing for business in the UK. One of them, ACC, has seen sales mushroom from £25m to £60m since last year alone. Rob Hunt, ACC's marketing director, explained: "We can make profits because we buy call time in bulk from BT and have lower overheads because we're a smaller company."

Though the UK market has been open to resellers since the start of the decade, the survey says the business will explode further when other European countries deregulate their markets in 1998. Already, resale companies are finding ways of getting round controls.

"The regulators are no longer

capable of keeping a grip on the market because it's becoming explosive and volatile. You can't stand in the way of it," said Mr Young.

The biggest boom in reselling is in the US, where the new operators are already eating into higher-value services offered by the likes of AT&T and MCI. The world's largest resale company, USA Global Link, has seen turnover grow from \$30m in 1993 to \$170m last year.

Holland Taylor, the chief executive, argues the resale business could seriously hit BT and MCI when the two firms merge. "The dinosaurs see comfort by merging and getting bigger. But this industry is changing overnight and you can't judge the future by what happened in the past," he said.

Plan to cut debt of poorest countries suffers setback

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Plans to start reducing the debt burden on the world's poorest countries, agreed in Washington only six weeks ago, face a severe setback.

A meeting in Paris today between Western governments and Mozambique is expected to result in absolutely no extra debt relief for the country despite pledges made by the West at the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund.

Officials from the Group of Seven industrial countries said then that the first beneficiaries could have details of their debt reductions agreed by Christmas, and the IMF's managing di-

rector, Michel Camdessus, described the initiative as a "done deal".

But it has emerged that today's meeting of the "Paris Club", whose member governments had promised to write off 80 per cent of eligible debt for suitable borrowers, will offer Mozambique, the second-poorest country in the world, exactly the same deal as before.

Along with Uganda, Mozambique was expected to be one of the first countries to benefit from greater debt relief because of its rigour in applying an economic austerity programme.

Its government had estimated that the more generous terms supposedly agreed in Washington at the beginning of

last month would save it about \$20m a year in interest payments to the West.

The setback will anger charities which have campaigned vigorously for debt reduction, and seen the principle gradually accepted by the governments of the rich countries. They have praised Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for his efforts to move the issue to the top of the international policy agenda.

A joint statement by George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Walter Paul Khotso Makhulu, Archbishop of Central Africa, said Mozambique should not be allowed to enter the new millennium with any debt which it could not repay.

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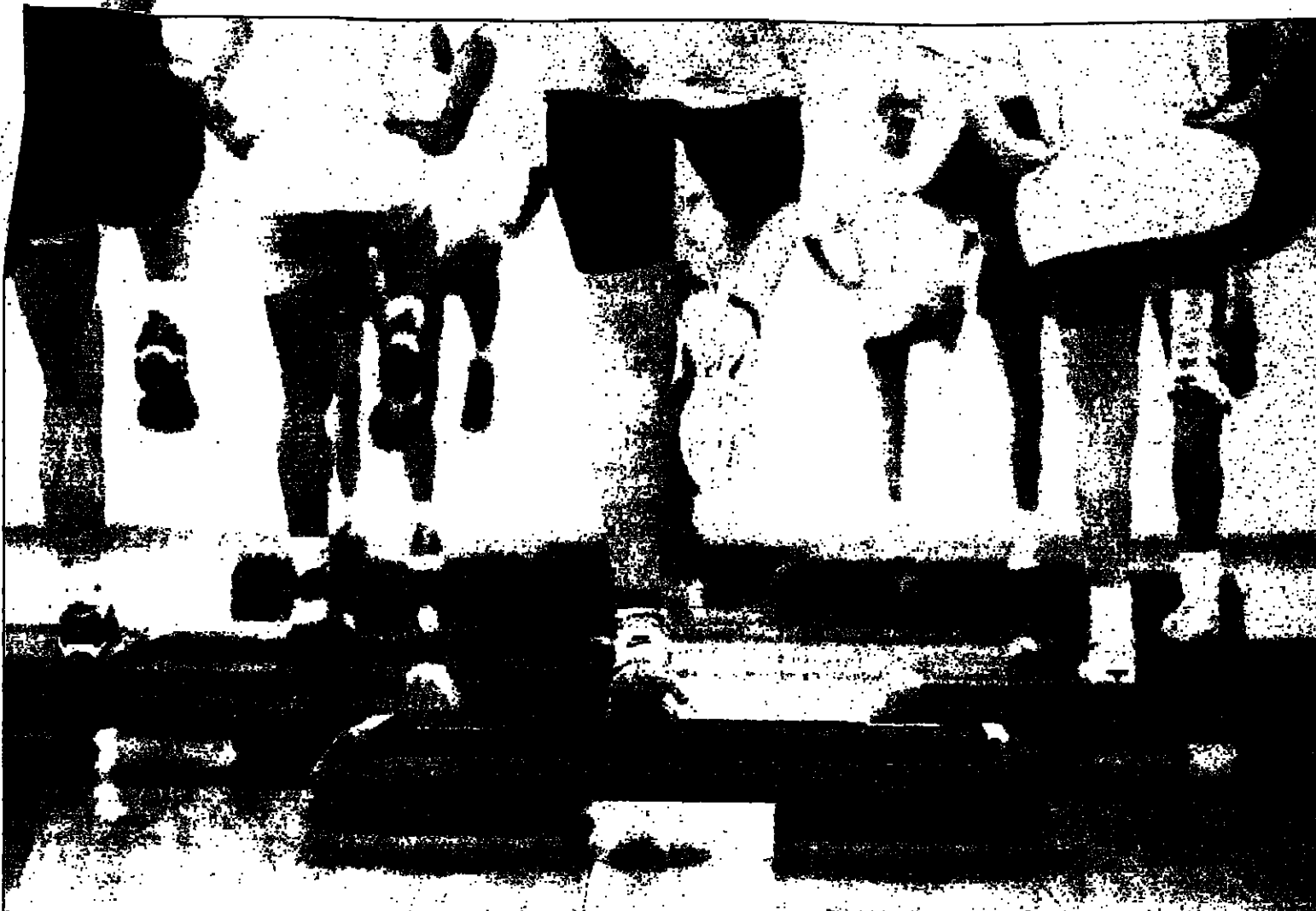
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Step it up: more exercise increases bone mass, which may help guard against bone disease

Photograph: Edward Webb

Feel it in your bone cells

As anyone who has broken one knows, bones are not just passive items that hold up the rest of the body. They clearly have some form of internal signalling system, which helps them mend from breaks. Now an international team of scientists has made an unexpected discovery about that system which could lead to a new generation of drugs for treating bone diseases such as osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis – which causes bones to become weaker – affects around 3 million people in the UK and costs the NHS about £750m a year. Forty people die each year because of osteoporosis-related bone fractures: post-menopausal women are particularly at risk.

The researchers, led by Professor Tim Skerry at the University of York and Dr Larry Suva at Harvard Medical School, have found that bone cells contain signalling apparatus previously thought only to occur in the brain.

The discovery could enable us to eavesdrop on the chemical conversations between bone cells that dictate whether the body's needs demand that bones should – at the cell level – be built up or torn down. Hormonal changes during menopause are thought to interfere with this signalling, causing bone to be degraded unnecessarily.

Bone is being continuously formed and re-absorbed by the body. Whether there is a net loss or gain depends on circumstances. A bone that is stressed, through exercise for example, will gain mass; an unused one loses it. A tennis player's serving arm has greater bone mass than the non-serving arm. Astronauts, whose bones are hardly loaded at all, lose skeletal

Bones, it turns out, are rather like brains: their cells signal to each other to tell them when to grow. This could be good news for osteoporosis sufferers, writes **Simon Hadlington**

tal mass during a space mission. A Finnish study in Friday's *Lancet* showed that doing three classes of step aerobics a week increased bone mass by up to 3.7 per cent.

"Loading has the greatest effect on stimulating bone formation," says Professor Skerry. "We want to understand the biochemical mechanisms underlying that response."

Bone is a highly complex material that leaves structural engineers feeling envious. It is a composite, consisting of fibres of a tough protein, collagen, embedded in a mineral called hydroxyapatite. This gives it both tensile and compressive strength. It is also a "smart" material. Entombed within the collagen/hydroxyapatite matrix are cells called osteocytes, each of which has scores of thread-like protrusions, forming a network throughout the bone.

Osteocytes act as sensors. When the bone is loaded they send signals to cells at the bone surface, osteoblasts, which instruct them to synthesise new bone. If bone is idle, a third type of cell is called into action. These are osteoclasts, which are manufactured in bone marrow. They "scavenge" excess bone, causing bone mass to decline. It is the unregulated action of osteoclasts that is responsible for osteoporosis.

Professor Skerry and Dr Suva want to know how osteocytes translate a mechanical stimulus – or absence of one – into a chemical message that

tells the osteoblasts and osteoclasts what to do.

It is known that bone cells respond very quickly to loading: enzymes in osteoclasts are switched on within minutes of a brief burst of vigorous exercise. One reason for these biochemical changes may be that when osteocytes detect mechanical loading, genes are switched on or off, causing signalling systems to be activated or deactivated.

To test this, the team took two bone samples: one that had been subjected to loading, and an equivalent sample that had not. They then extracted the genetic material from the bone cells and subjected it to a complex procedure to compare which genes were active in the two samples.

There were subtle but clear differences. In particular, one gene which was active in the unloaded sample was absent in the cells from bones that had been loaded. After analysing the DNA sequence of this gene and consulting a database of known gene sequences, Professor Skerry and Dr Suva realised that they had stumbled upon something remarkable.

The gene that was deactivated by loading encodes a protein called a glutamate transporter. Glutamate is an amino acid involved in the transmission of signals between nerve cells. To facilitate its action a particular piece of cellular apparatus is needed, a transporter. This was identified

in the brain around four years ago by American researchers, who then screened just about every other tissue in the body for the presence of the transporter – and didn't find it. They thus assumed that it was exclusive to nerve cells. But they did not screen bone.

Having confirmed that the transporter protein was indeed present, Professor Skerry and Dr Suva also identified the other main component of the glutamate signalling system, glutamate receptors.

"It would be very surprising if these molecules were present unless glutamate is involved in signalling between bone cells," says Professor Skerry.

This could be significant in two ways. "If the response to mechanical loading works by glutamate-mediated signalling, drugs which affect glutamate may be able to alter the signalling system. It might be possible to fool the cells into thinking that the bone is being loaded when it is not," he says.

"It also opens a whole new door for the control of bone cells generally, because no-one had thought of glutamate in the context of bone cells before. It is probably involved in things other than the response to mechanical loading."

Professor Skerry's lab in York, which is funded by Smith and Nephew, the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council, the Wellcome Trust, the Nuffield Foundation and the BBSRC (a government research council), has

now embarked on the slow process of finding out precisely what role glutamate plays in the biochemistry of bone cells.

He is cautious when asked how soon useful therapies might emerge from the research. "These findings are very new. But because we can tap into the huge expertise on glutamate receptors in the brain we might see treatments in a shorter time than is usual when a new discovery is made."

One thing, however, has become clear. Osteocytes, with their thread-like projections, have long been thought to resemble astrocytes – cells found in the brain. The possibility that glutamate plays an important role in the function of both these types of cell highlights another similarity. The term "bonehead" might not be such an insult after all.

From Nazis to gnats via the Gulf war

Conceived in a search for nerve gas, organophosphates have never been far from controversy. By **John Emsley**

Gulf war syndrome, sheep-dipper's flu, and even BSE have recently been linked to organophosphate (OP) insecticides. Their name, somehow redolent of fertilisers with dire warnings on the packet, give rise to suspicion almost immediately.

Yet is it justified? Organophosphates occur naturally, and there are OPs in our body – including that essential of life, DNA, the high-energy molecule ATP, and the natural emulsifier, lecithin. All are molecules with phosphate groups to which organic groups are attached. However, natural OPs generally have one or two organic groups, whereas insecticide OPs have three.

Campaigners against OPs point out that they are related to nerve gases like sarin, although these are not OPs. They do share a common ancestor, though, and attack the same key enzyme, acetylcholinesterase, which is needed to cancel the chemical messenger, acetylcholine, after it has done its job of transmitting a signal across a nerve junction. Nerve gases block the enzyme so effectively that one tiny drop is lethal. OPs seem a lot safer.

But according to Graham Matthews, professor of pest management at Imperial College, London, and author of *Pesticide Application Methods* (Blackwell, 1992), this does not mean they are safe. "A few people appear to be particularly sensitive to OPs, which span a range of toxicity. Some, such as malathion, are much less toxic and may be used in the home, in shampoos for head lice, or flea collars for cats and dogs, but some that were used in agriculture, such as parathion, are now considered too hazardous and are banned in some countries."

Malathion is widely used by gardeners and farmers, and smells foul because the molecule has two sulphur atoms, a common feature of many synthetic OPs. In the Gulf war it was used to protect Iraqi prisoners of war from mosquitoes. Allied forces, on the other hand, had their sleeping quarters sprayed with less foul-smelling OPs – dimethyl phosphorothionate, diazinon

and azamethiphos. The OPs used in sheep-dips – diazinon and propetamphos – have one sulphur atom in the molecule.

Many OPs were first made in Nazi Germany, where Dr Gerhard Schrader led the search for phosphorus-based nerve gases.

happens within hours of exposure; the intermediate syndrome, which occurs within days and the delayed response referred to as organophosphate-induced delayed neuropathy (OPIDN). There is also chronic syndrome, where there is damage to the nervous system building up over many years.

The acute syndrome manifests itself as sheep-dipper's flu whereas the intermediate syndrome results in a sudden paralysis of the muscles about three or four days after exposure. The condition lasts for about a month. Dr Jamal is in no doubt that OPs are the cause, and also believes that the chronic syndrome is linked to them too.

The ability to cause degenerative changes in people is associated with the inhibition of another enzyme in nerves, neuropathy target esterase (NTE), and this is now used as a marker to identify harmful OPs. If an OP is shown to inhibit NTE then it cannot be licensed for use. But Dr Jamal believes it is not an absolute test because it does not spot OPs that produce chronic symptoms.

Among farmers, those on sheep farms are most at risk. MAFS says there are more than 42 million sheep in the UK, all of which must be dipped once a year to control blowflies and scab. Of the thousands who do this job, relatively few have been affected. Those who think it suffer symptoms of OP exposure should contact MAFS's Veterinary Medicines Directorate panel set up in 1985, de with 577 such cases.

Dr John Emsley is science writer in residence at Imperial College, London.



British soldiers in the Gulf, where OPs were used on both sides

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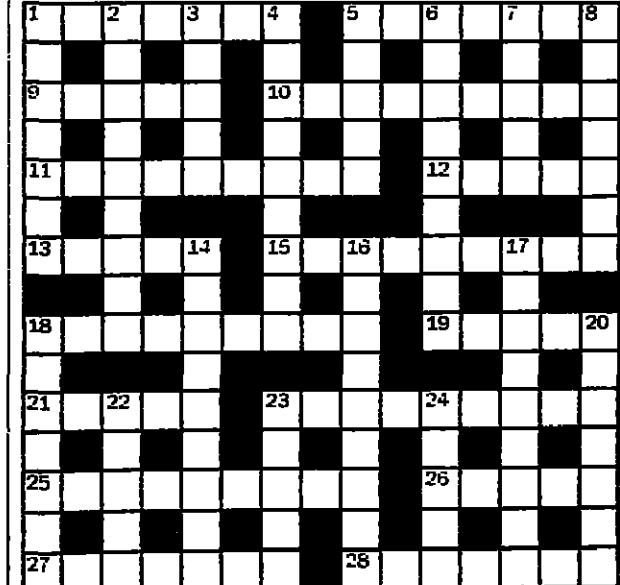
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3147 Monday 18 November 1996. By Curylus



ACROSS

- 1 Make blue crease? (7)
- 5 Unusual facet in party with our legal standing? (2,5)
- 9 A death untimely? Could be one's getting on (5)
- 10 One left a 5 down to get a new benefit (9)
- 11 Cover day in Eire's disturbed County (9)
- 12 Vessel in a port advanced but not quietly (5)
- 13 A European takes conservative steps to accompany music (5)

DOWN

- 1 Having no prospect of lifeless finish (4,3)
- 2 Pony used badly by Frenchman giving false name (9)
- 3 In Madrid and Berlin the church's official (5)
- 4 Ocean lad's drunk gin with added taste (9)
- 5 I'd sent up vehicle for bed (5)
- 6 Like a pigeon enthusiast, dogged (3,6)
- 7 After tea I take a seat (5)
- 8 Work for poet to begin at speed (7)
- 14 Enthusiastic English investor meets one at hospital department (9)
- 16 Costing the earth? No! (4,5)
- 17 Cane with misplaced zeal to eliminate a cheat (9)
- 18 Where one is at home for a short time, in Derby? (7)
- 20 Dealt with flat in US having given up work (7)
- 22 Throw out non-British unit of weight (5)
- 23 Something to drink in June, mostly, a cold something (5)
- 24 Clock's about right, a Whitehall speciality? (5)

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